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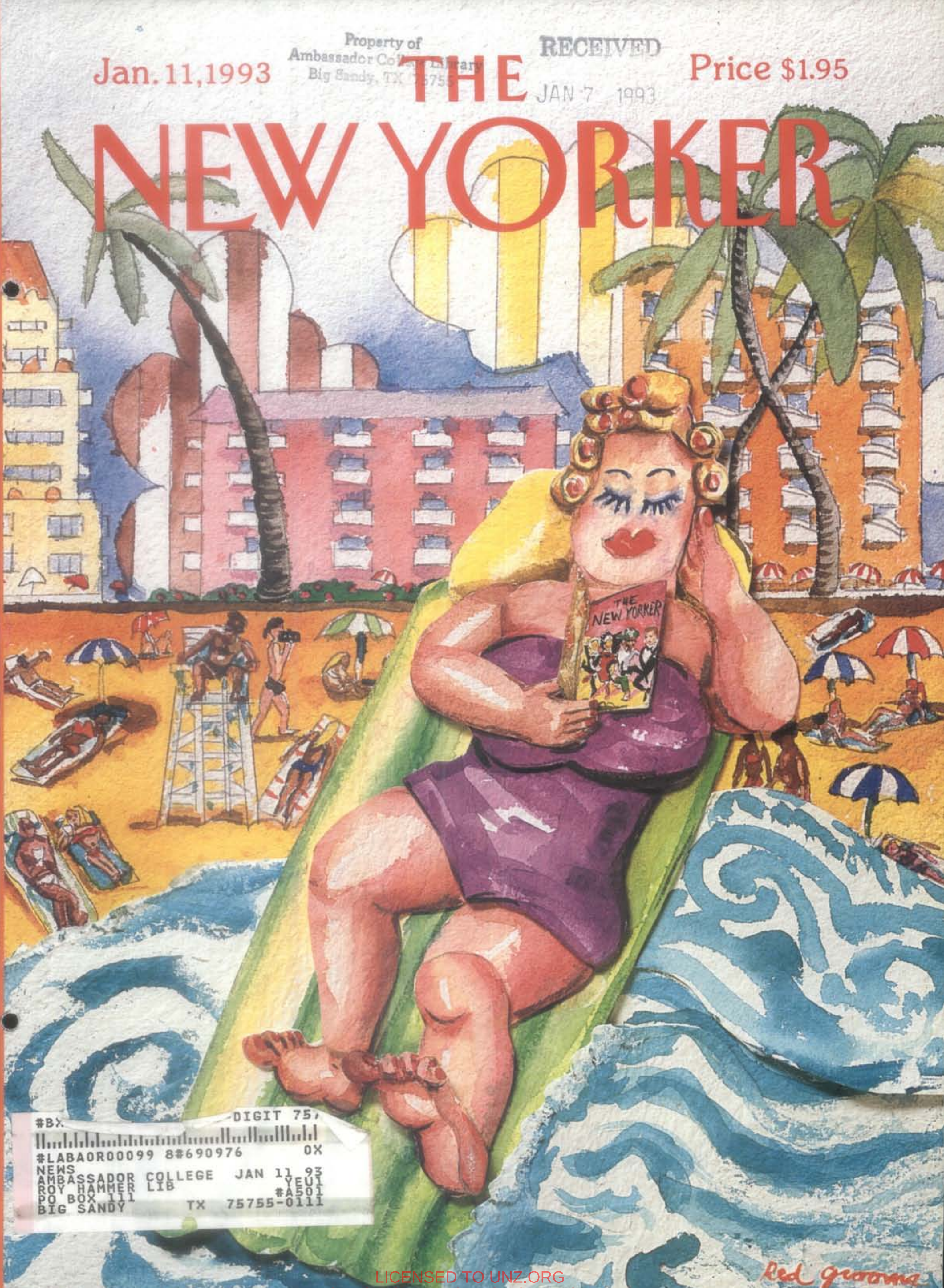

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drop the trombone lessons. You go to the beach one summer and to the lake up in the mountains the next. And you finally decide to go see the Grand Canyon. Your dog barks at all the gas station attendants along the way. You pick the kids up from soccer practices, which soon turn into basketball practices, which soon turn into baseball practices. Then come the football games, which they don't play in, but still need a ride to. And just when you're starting to feel a little like a taxi service, one of your little darlings walks up to you, smiles sweetly, and asks for the keys to the car. You might as well enjoy the trip.

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# THE NEW YORKER

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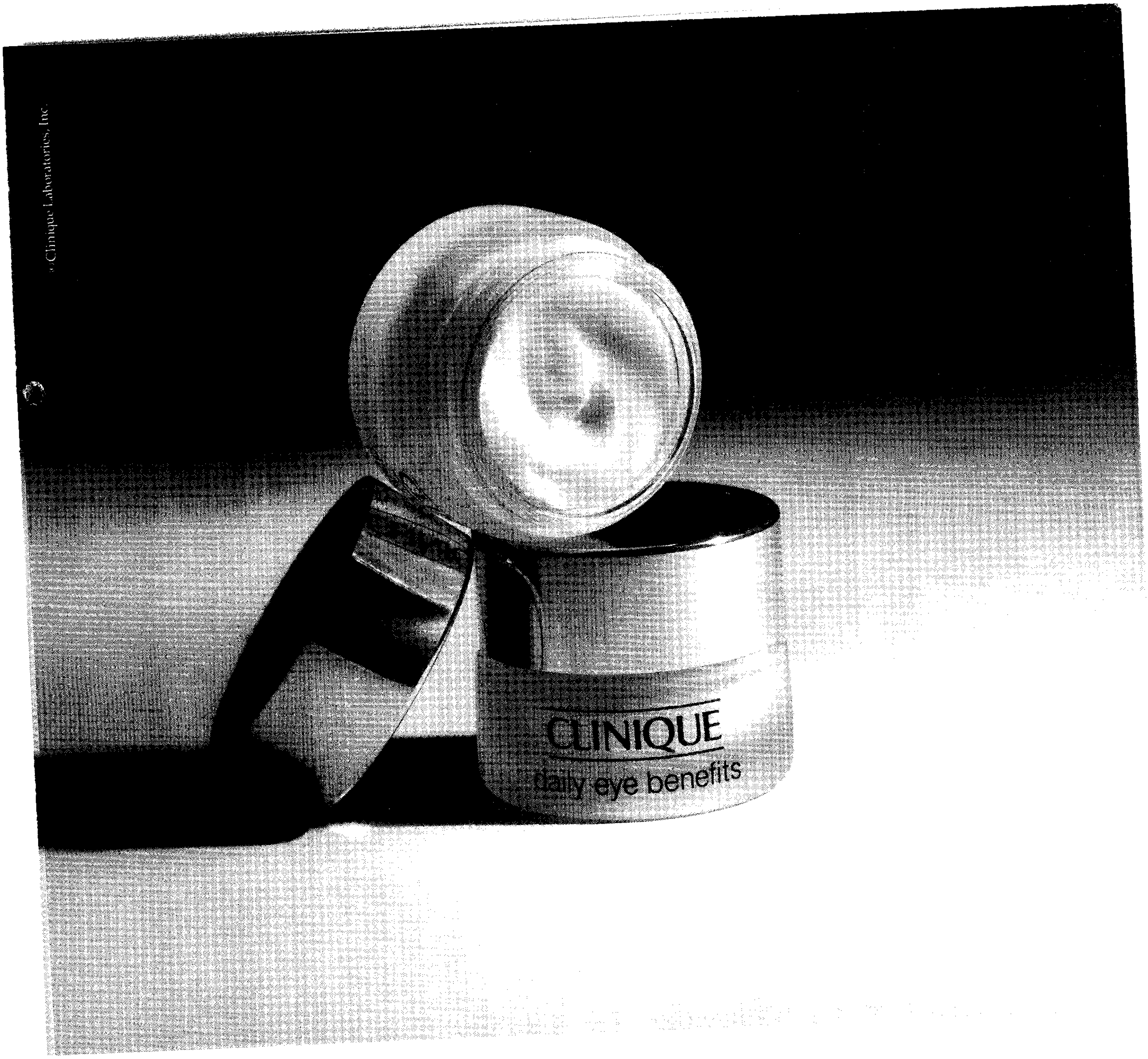

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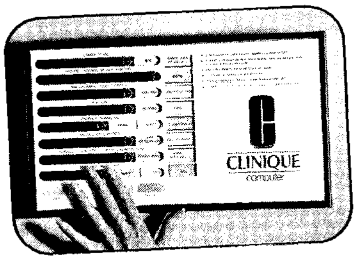

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# COMMENT

## GLOBAL GUNSLINGER, GLOBAL COPS

"IT would be the irony of fate if my Administration had to deal chiefly with foreign affairs," Woodrow Wilson remarked to a friend before quitting New Jersey for Washington and his swearing-in. That, of course, was precisely the irony fate had in store for the century's first Democratic President. Wilson led the United States into the European war; he destroyed his health in his effort, noble but inept, to shape the war's aftermath; and he sent the Marines on frequent (and frequently unwise) forays into Latin America. Behind all these actions was his profound belief in America's democratic mission—his passion to construct what he once described, in so many words, as a "new world order."

There is a powerful whiff of Wilsonian idealism in the capital at the moment, and it emanates from both the outgoing and the incoming Administrations. George Bush governed for most of his term as an apostle of foreign-policy realism, promoting and defending what he saw as the national interest in ways that took precedence over "merely" humanitarian considerations. His parting gesture, the intervention in Somalia, shares with his earlier adventures a readiness to use military force, but it carries an utterly different rationale. No hard-nosed national interest demanded it; astonishingly, and movingly, it turns out to be the first substantial military operation that the United States has ever mounted on solely moral grounds. Mr. Bush, as he leaves office, is defining himself as Wilson's heir. In what was in essence a foreign-policy farewell address at Texas A. & M. University just before Christmas, he asserted that "our country's tradition of idealism" has made us "unique among nations."

Like Woodrow Wilson, Bill Clinton will take office after an election fought almost entirely on domestic issues. Mr. Clinton's approach to foreign policy is only beginning to take shape, but what he said during his long campaign suggests an inclination toward activism in behalf of democratic and humanitarian goals. He believes, he said in October,

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*"I did khat once with Roger. Should I go on?"*

• •

that "no American foreign policy can succeed if it slights our commitment to democracy." The Somalian intervention, as it happens, does not entirely follow this precept. All the same, Mr. Clinton has said he supports it. He certainly shares the impulse behind it.

That impulse, the humanitarian impulse, is a thoroughly admirable one. But it offers no guide to the makers of policy, no means of choosing from among the world's ills those which merit the use of power, especially military power, and no structure for exercising that power. If it did, the United States might now be deploying troops in East Timor, Liberia, Kurdistan, and Haiti as well as in Somalia.

All during the 1992 campaign, both Mr. Clinton and Mr. Bush invoked the shade of Harry Truman—Truman the scrappy campaigner. But the Truman whose example now seems suddenly relevant is Truman the architect of international institutions for a world in which the old order had crumbled—institutions like NATO and the United Nations. During the Cold War, NATO did amazingly well what it was designed to do: it contained the Soviet Union, provided security for the construction of an economically powerful community of nations, and deterred global nuclear war. The Cold War's end has made the purpose of NATO, and perhaps even its existence, obsolete; and NATO's quest for a new "role" seems an exercise in bureaucratic survivalism. In the case of the United Nations, the pattern is exactly reversed. It never did the job that Truman (and Roosevelt before him) intended it to do: the Cold War stymied the U.N.'s ability to keep the peace, and the mortal ideological conflict that underlay the Cold War mocked the U.N.'s pretense of representing a global consensus based on legal and democratic norms. With the end of the Cold War, however, there actually is such a global consensus, rough and imperfect though it may be; and, in consequence, the idea of a powerful U.N., able to lay down and enforce the law among (and even within) countries, no longer seems fanciful.

When the Cold War was on, the notion of a global policeman—whether in the guise of the United States alone or of some international body—was both naïve (because police work assumes an organized community of interests and values) and reckless (because the prospect of nuclear Armageddon was so horrifying). Now it is neither. The world needs, if not a global policeman, then a global police force. What it has instead is a kind of global sheriff: the United States, which saddles up and deputizes a posse every time it decides that some bandit has gone too far. This modern version of the law west of the Pecos is better than no law at all. But what has to follow, as it did west of the Pecos, is a means of enforcement that does not rely upon the services of a lone gunslinger. In the Security Council of the United Nations, Russia and China have voted with the United States, Britain, and France to authorize the use of force in the Persian Gulf and now in Somalia. But in other regions of the world, such as Cambodia and Bosnia, U.N. peacekeeping forces can only monitor agreements, not enforce them. Mr. Clinton could solidify his commitment to a muscular morality in foreign policy by urging the creation of a permanent global police force of the kind F.D.R. originally envisaged. Less grandly, he could pay up the money the United States owes for the operating costs of the United Nations.

As Mr. Clinton prepares for his Inauguration, he is aware that a shattered peace will confront him and his Secretary of State. Warren Christopher is known as a cautious conciliator, a lawyer's lawyer, preoccupied with process rather than policy. It would be a welcome surprise if he should seize the initiative in designing a new foreign policy for the post-Cold War world. It would be equally welcome, and less surprising, if Mr. Clinton himself should do so.

Dean Acheson, Truman's Secretary of State, writes in his memoirs, "Present at Creation," that once the Truman Administration had "found its footing in foreign affairs its policies showed a sweep, a breadth of conception and boldness of action both new in this country's history and obviously centrally planned and directed." What America needs at the end of the century is policymakers of a like sweep and daring—men and women capable of pursuing Wilsonian ends through Trumanesque (and Achesonian) means. If our new President and his Secretary of State understand this, they will run less risk of being absent at the creation. If they do not, however, the brave new domestic-policy President may find himself, through inattention or timidity, overwhelmed by foreign entanglements. Somalia is just the beginning. ♦

# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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## THE THEATRE

### *Finally This Winter*

IT'S curious enough that in the course of a brilliant career Maggie Smith has never played a Tennessee Williams character; to discover that she's never played any American heroine is jolting. Miss Smith—the latest in a shimmering line of English actresses who have excelled in Williams' work—makes her début in both respects not onstage but on television, as Mrs. Venable, in the "Great Performances" presentation of "Suddenly Last Summer" (to be broadcast January 6, on PBS). So easily does Miss Smith assume the bearing of this Southern-gothic Gorgon that were it not for the presence of Natasha Richardson as Catharine Holly—the young woman who knows the real story behind the grisly demise of Mrs. Venable's poet son, Sebastian—you might forget about every other English actress altogether.

Richard Eyre, the director of this new version, has returned to the play's original, single-act structure, just as he and his cast and crew have gone back to Shepperton Studios, the site of the 1959 movie shoot, for filming. Eyre wasn't hampered by memories of that adaptation. "It pandered to the melodramatic," he says. Any weakness in his production is more than made up for by Miss Smith and by the appropriately perplexed Rob Lowe, in the Montgomery Clift part. It must be said, however, that in their scenes together Miss Smith does have a tendency to devour him.

### OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

*(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)*

**Anna Christie**—Liam Neeson, Natasha Richardson, Rip Torn, and Anne Meara head the cast of the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of the play by Eugene O'Neill. David Leveaux directed. In previews. (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

**Forbidden Broadway 1993**—A new edition of the long-running show spoofs "Guys and Dolls," "Crazy for You," and "Jelly's Last Jam," among other targets. Previews through Jan. 10. Opens Jan. 12 at 7. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

**Jeffrey**—A comedy by Paul Rudnick, with John Michael Higgins as a young gay man who has decided to give up sex. In previews. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

**The Last Yankee**—The première of a new play by Arthur Miller, with Tom Aldredge, Frances Conroy, Rose Gregorio, and John Heard. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

**New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players**—Presenting **H.M.S. PINAFORE,** which begins performances Jan. 7 at 8, and runs through Jan. 17. John Astin stars in this production. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)

**Tales from Hollywood**—The New York première of a play by Christopher Hampton. Performed by the Barrow Group theatre company. Opens Jan. 7 at 7, and runs through Jan. 24. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

**Theda Bara and the Frontier Rabbi**—The Jewish Repertory Theatre presents a musical comedy about the silent-film star and a young rabbi on a blind date. The book is by Jeff Hochhauser; the score is by Robert L. Johnston; and the lyrics are by both Mr. Hochhauser and Mr. Johnston. With Jeanine LaManna and Jonathan Hadley in the leading roles. Previews begin Jan. 9. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

**The Years**—A new play by Cindy Lou Johnson, with Ashley Crow, Ron Eldard, William Fichtner, Julie Hagerty, Marcia Gay Harden, and Frank Whaley. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

### OPENED RECENTLY

**Bubbe Meises, Bubbe Stories**—A musical in which a granddaughter recalls her grandmothers and their stories. Written by, and starring, Ellen Gould. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

**Deshima**—A new work by Ping Chong. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Closes Jan. 17.)

**The Destiny of Me**—A new play by Larry Kramer. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

**The Good Natur'd Man**—A 1768 play by Oliver Goldsmith. The cast includes Robin Leslie Brown, Frank Geraci, and Kurt Rhoads. Directed by Anthony Cornish. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708.)

**Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh**—A musical based on the song parodies of Allan Sherman. It was conceived and written by Douglas Bernstein and Rob Krausz. Stephen Berger, Tovah Feldshuh, Jason Graae, Paul Kreppel, and Mary Testa make up the cast. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

**Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris**—A revival of the musical put together from the works of M. Brel by Eric Blau and Mort Shuman. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

**Jean Cocteau Repertory**—Presenting **THE IDIOT,** David Fishelson's new adaptation of Dostoevsky's novel. Mr. Fishelson was the director. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

**My Favorite Year**—A new musical, based on the movie of the same name, by Joseph Dougherty, Stephen Flaherty, and Lynn Ahrens. With Evan Pappas and Tim Curry. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/28/92.) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes Jan. 10.)

**The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me**—A series of vignettes, by the rising writer/performer David Drake, about gay life in the age of AIDS. Mr. Drake is more gifted as a performer than as a writer, but his show is frequently absorbing—by turns silly and poignant. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 564-8038. The show takes a three-week hiatus starting Jan. 11; performances resume on Feb. 3.)

**Oleanna**—David Mamet, in fine, curmudgeonly form, takes on political correctness, sexual harassment, and a number of other isms in this brief, powerful drama that continues to stir up the ideologues. Rebecca Pidgeon and William H. Macy lend articulate support to a play whose skepticism is as evenhanded as it is corrosive. Not to be missed. (11/16/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100.)

**Remembrance**—Set in Belfast, Graham Reid's absorbing and often entertaining play tells the story of a man and a woman—he a Protestant and she a Catholic, and both of them widowed and in their sixties—who meet regularly at a cemetery (each there to mourn a son who was a victim of the current "troubles") and who slowly fall in love. They are both beset by grown children who, in different ways, raise hell. The action is a matter of brief scenes, some of them quite funny. Milo O'Shea and Frances Sternhagen can seldom have been better than they are in the leading roles, and they are ably supported by Mia Dillon, Caroleen Feeney, John Finn, and Terry Donnelly. Terence Lamude directed. (10/12/92) (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 967-9077.)

**Ruthless!**—This camp musical about a monster child star is harmless and amusing enough—assuming you can stomach the little girl. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

**The Seagull**—The pleasures of this aimless production—and there are some—are all peripheral; Maryann Plunkett, for example, is an extraordinary Masha, and John Franklyn-Robbins is a fine Sorin, but the principals tend to fade out (along with Anton Chekhov). Marshall W. Mason directed. (12/21/92) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280. Closes Jan. 10.)

**The Sisters Rosensweig**—Wendy Wasserstein's new play, a comedy with serious undertones, is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who's a professional dispenser of advice. They are portrayed by Jane Alexander, Frances McDormand, and Madeline Kahn, each of whom proves worthy (and then some) of her role. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. (11/2/92) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. The show is on a week's hiatus through Jan. 10; performances resume Jan. 12.)

**Someone Who'll Watch Over Me**—Alec McCowen (English), Stephen Rea (Irish), and James McDaniel (American) give stunning performances as hostages in Beirut in Frank McGuinness's moving and humorous play. Robin Lefèvre directed. (12/7/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

**Spic-O-Rama**—Six well-written characters who have found not only their author but also their performer in John Leguizamo's scintillating and scathing one-man show about Latino life in the Big City. Leguizamo is vivacious, inventive, and very, very funny. The show is original and scenically ingenious. (11/9/92) (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100. Closes Jan. 24.)

**3 from Brooklyn**—A comedy-and-music revue, conceived by, and starring, Sal Richards. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

### LONG RUNS

**BEAU JEST:** Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CONVERSATIONS WITH MY FATHER:** Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **FALSETTOS:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FIVE GUYS NAMED MOE:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **JELLY'S LAST JAM:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.

*Margie Gillis at the Joyce Theatre*

VIVIENNE FLESHER

## DANCE

### *Life Studies*

NEARLY ten years have passed since the death of George Balanchine, and a number of public commemorations have been planned for New Yorkers in 1993. "Balanchine," an exhibition in the main gallery of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, is the first of them. The show is largely made up of black-and-white photographs, many of them beautiful, some of them relatively unfamiliar, and all of them expertly captioned. They have been grouped under such headings as "Waltzes," "Narratives," and "Americana." There are also a few of the actual costumes that Barbara Karinska (a giant in her own right) made for Balanchine's ballets. And there are other treasures, such as the original lyre that Pavel Tchelitchew fashioned for Lew Christensen, the Orpheus in Balanchine's 1936 "Orpheus and Eurydice." This legendary instrument seems to be half wire and plastic, and half light. The lyre, and the photos of Felia Dubrovska in "The Prodigal Son," are alone worth the trip.

The "Balanchine" exhibit will run through May 15. In conjunction with the show, there will be public seminars on the choreographer's work, to be held in the Bruno Walter Auditorium. Call 870-1630 for information.

**New York City Ballet**—Jan. 6 at 8: "Swan Lake," "Barber Violin Concerto," and "Cortège Hongrois."... ¶ Jan. 7 at 8: "Divertimento No. 15," "Barber Violin Concerto," and "The Four Seasons."... ¶ Jan. 8 at 8: "La Source," "Moves," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2."... ¶ Jan. 9 at 2: "Serenade," "I Have My Own Room," and "The Four Seasons."... ¶ Jan. 9 at 8: "La Source," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Andantino," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2."... ¶ Jan. 10 at 1: "Divertimento No. 15," "Barber Violin Concerto," and "Symphony in Three Movements."... ¶ Jan. 10 at 7: "Serenade," "Moves," and "Cortège Hongrois."... ¶ Jan. 12 at 8: "Barber Violin Concerto," "I Have My Own Room," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Feb. 21.)

**Margie Gillis**—An engagement that includes five new pieces: "Variations," "Desert," "Landscape," "A Gathering" (a quintet for five women), and "Margret of Roseland." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Jan. 6-8 at 8, Jan. 9 at 2 and 8, and Jan. 10 at 2.)

**Phyllis Lamhut Dance Company**—In the première of her full-length work "Dislocations." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Jan. 7-9 at 8, and Jan. 10 at 3 and 8.)

**"Sanctuary"**—A dance/music/performance collaboration by Jim Self, Dan Martin, and Michael Biello. Presented by Danspace Project. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Jan. 7-10 at 8:30.)

**Sarah Skaggs Dance Company**—In the première of "Higher Ground," a site-specific work. (St. Patrick's Youth Center, 268 Mulberry St. For reservations, call 924-0077. Jan. 9 at 9.)

**Molissa Fenley**—The opening performance of a solo engagement that includes "Provenance Unknown," to a commissioned score by Philip Glass, and three premières: "Sightings," "Nullarbor," and "Channel." (Joyce, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Jan. 12 at 8. Through Jan. 17.)

## NIGHT LIFE

### *New Leaf*

FOR a couple of years now, the Ritz has seemed exceedingly uninviting: a dark, yawning cave fit only for hardheaded moshers or Dante and Virgil. It's a pleasure, then, to report that the club's new owners have made a New Year's resolution. They're building a supper-club-style side room, and they're planning to offer a wider range of acts, including the occasional low-key sit-down show. What's more, they're training their famously hostile staff to play nicely with others; they're serving draft beer; and they're painting the walls a different color, because all that pink was apparently scaring off fashion shows.

These changes come at a critical time for the Ritz (254 West 54th Street). The club, which reopens January 19, hasn't been much of a participant in the New York night-club scene lately—it's been idle a surprising number of nights, while its archenemy, nearby Roseland (239 West 52nd Street), has been heating up. (On January 22, for example, the churning, psychedelic band Ned's Atomic Dustbin performs there.) Walter Durkacz, who is the Ritz's new bookings manager and who was formerly on the staff of Wetlands, says, "It may take a while before people give the room another chance. But we hope that in six months or so everybody will notice what a turnaround the Ritz has made."

*(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town.... ¶ Call the phone number listed for performance schedules and, since musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change, to confirm engagements.)*

**Algonquin Hotel**, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**Andrea Marcovicci's** cabaret juggernaut rumbles into its third month in the old-timey environs of the Oak Room. The singer is currently offering a program called "Double Torch." The late show on Fridays and Saturdays is "Just Kern." Dining.

**Arthur's Tavern**, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—A quirky, endearing Village watering hole, perpetually decorated for the holidays—all of them. The musicians work in the back of the room, in a well ringed by a bar—a setup that seems to bring out the latent show-biz tendencies in some of the bar's patrons. Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy and John Parker, Fridays to the George Stubbs trio and the Freddy Francis trio (who is also there on Saturdays with Mabel Godwin), and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band.

## NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

**BALLROOM,** 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool green music hall that features a steady stream of international pop and cabaret stars, as well as the occasional drag queen. It is also a tapas restaurant—if you haven't had dinner, *you may never make it to the show.* **ROSA MARIA** took part in last year's Brazilian festival here, and just now the jazz-and-blues singer is in the midst of a three-week run dedicated to samba-reggae, which is a hybrid of African and Caribbean music.

**BLUE NOTE,** 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. **KOKO TAYLOR** is here through Jan. 10, **JERRY PORTNOY** comes in on Jan. 11, and the long-standing fusion outfit known as **SPYRO GYRA** begins a week-long engagement on Jan. 12. Dining.

**BLUE WILLOW,** 644 Broadway, at Bleecker St. (673-6480)—This room is oddly Victorian for lower Broadway, a region almost exclusively devoted to a celebration of youth. You won't find any funky murals or drinks with funny names here, just marble walls, antique furnishings, and a ceiling that would be hard to hit with a baseball. It's an agreeable place for conversation, which is probably why the small jazz combos that set up here nightly often get relegated to being background music. Dining.

**BOTTOM LINE,** 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A great black loft that's jammed with row after row of tables—it looks a little like the site of a standardized test. **IAIN MATTHEWS** and **CAROLYN HESTER** share a bill on Jan. 7, and **LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III** appears on Jan. 8. Wainwright began his professional life in the early seventies with a trio of albums, titled "Album," "Album II," and "Album III," the last of which yielded a Top Forty hit called "Dead Skunk." The singer has done some acting, but Wainwright is best known for his never-ending parody of the singer-songwriter profession. He hasn't exactly made money hand over fist, but his followers are steadfast and will be laughing all the way to the Bottom Line and back. **POCO,** which will be here on Jan. 9, was once a prime mover in seventies country-rock, but, early on, it lost members to the Eagles and Loggins & Messina. The band marched onward, and, by 1978, had finally earned itself a gold record, with "Legend." Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

**BRADLEY'S,** 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—The art collection in this neighborhood restaurant, bar, and jazz club is a curator's worst nightmare. Fortunately, the musicians who gather round the Steinway each night are usually more harmonious. **PHILIP HARPER** (trumpet), **KEVIN HAYS** (piano), and **DWAYNE BURNO** (bass) will be in Jan. 6-10. Mike LeDonne, Louis Hayes, and Peter Washington take over on Jan. 11. Dining.

**CARLYLE HOTEL,** Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and the **MODERN JAZZ QUARTET,** which has just begun a three-week engagement. The quartet has been doing its fastidious swinging for more than thirty years and has more than four hundred pieces in its repertoire. . . . ¶ **BARBARA CARROLL** presides across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar.

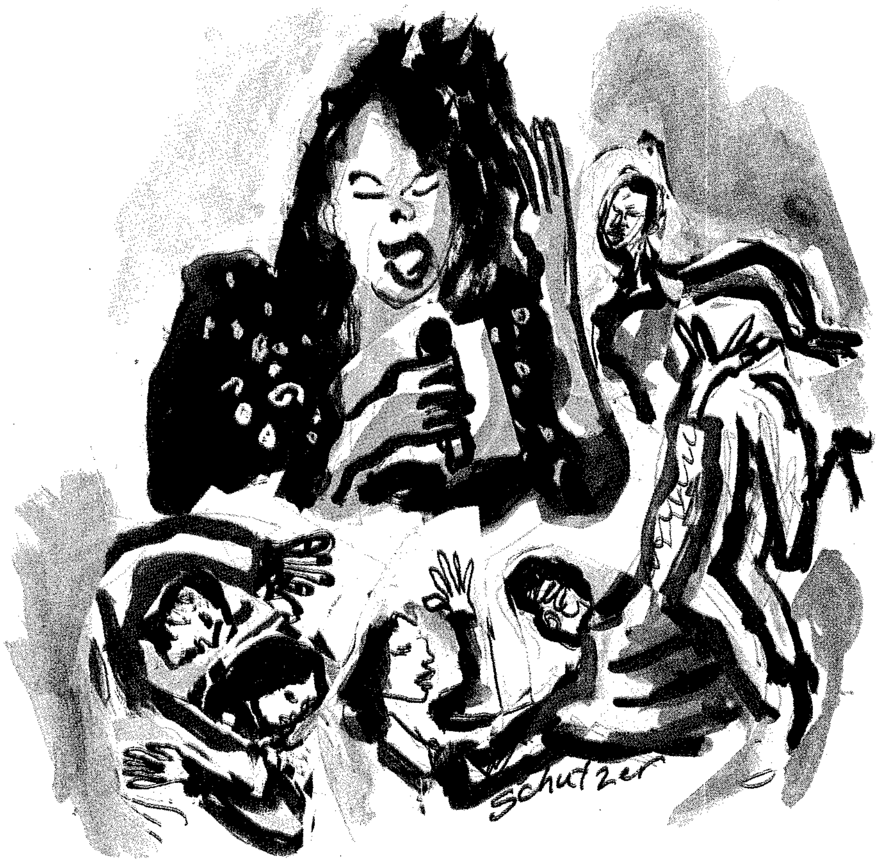
**CBGB & OMFUG,** 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving: the management has had the good sense not to renovate. In recent years, CB's has become something of an empire: the club is now flanked by a pizzeria/boutique on one side and a bar/performance space on the other—all your shopping needs taken care of in one convenient location. **BEAT POSITIVE** is here on Jan. 7, and **YO LA TENGO** and **HYPNOLOVEWHEEL** take part in a benefit on Jan. 9.

**DUPLEX,** 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—A two-floor entertainment center. The cheery white downstairs bar has French windows giving on to the bustle of Seventh Avenue, but the real clamor is indoors. Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, the waiters, and the audience. Pop standards are sung/shouted, usually with altered, risqué lyrics; wisecracks are fired across the room; and everyone laughs too hard. Upstairs, there's a quieter bar and a cabaret, where you'll find a variety of performers nightly.

**EAGLE TAVERN,** 355 W. 14th St. (924-0275)—Where swordfish leap on almost every wall. Where a cat with black and white spots sometimes walks the length of the bar. Where barbirds stare at football on the tube. And where, between the Sinatra and Streisand songs that emanate from the jukebox, one can often hear snatches of live bluegrass and Irish music floating in from the bright back room. **MIKE RAFFERTY** (flute), **MARY RAFFERTY** (button accordion, tin whistle, flute), and **JOHN DILLON** (guitar, vocals) come in on Jan. 8.

**FAT TUESDAY'S,** 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—The seating arrangement in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement makes flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. **FREDA PAYNE** is here through Jan. 10. **ROLAND HANNA,** a pianist who has served with Sarah Vaughan, the New York Jazz Sextet, and the U.S. Army, has at times in his career been wary of night clubs, preferring to try out original material in concert halls about forty blocks north of what he has referred to as "the smoke and the booze and the 'I don't care.'" In recent years, however, Hanna has been sighted downtown playing everything from turn-of-the-century ragtime to Miles Davis, always in top form. He and **CARRIE SMITH** will perform here as of Jan. 12. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

**KNICKERBOCKER,** 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, a menu full of items like bangers and mash, and a piano. Knickerbocker is an airy, good-spirited place and, while music often takes a back seat to conversation, some able piano-and-bass teams turn up regularly. One such duo, **PETE MALINVERNI** and **MICHAEL MOORE,** is here Jan 6-9.



*Rosa Maria at the Ballroom*

DENA SCHUTZER

**KNITTING FACTORY,** 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. **ARTO LINDSAY** and his band are in for a night on Jan 8. **ORNETTE COLEMAN'S PRIME-TIME** band takes the stage Jan. 11.

**LONE STAR ROADHOUSE,** 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—It's named for its Texas décor, but perhaps a more apt name would be the Second Chance, since so many lost, forgotten, or faded rockers turn up here. To be fair, the club's busy schedule also includes a variety of newer acts; **JOHN CAMPBELL,** for instance, will be here on Jan. 9. Campbell has just released "Howlin' Mercy," a blues-based-rock album that's long on howling and short on mercy. The singer has a dark, grainy voice, which he uses to good effect when singing about such things as love and sin. Occasionally, though, he swerves close to parody and sounds as if he should get off the bayou more often. **JOAN OSBORNE** will share a bill with him. Doug Stevens and the Out Band are here on Jan. 10. Dining.

**MAXWELL'S,** 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A plain blue back room whose far wall is decorated with round things. Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. This week: Oral Groove and the Indifference Engine (Jan. 7), the Barleycorns and the Seigobillies (Jan. 8), the Action Swingers and Daisy Cutter (Jan. 9), and Gutterball and the Clintons (Jan. 10).

**MICHAEL'S PUB,** 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—The Jelly Roll Morton tribute that's been in session since October has been extended indefinitely. **VERNEL BAGNERIS** portrays the self-proclaimed inventor of jazz with elegance, verve, and compassion, providing an intimate counterbalance to the psychologically tortured depiction currently being purveyed on Broadway. Bagneris bases his script on interviews Jelly Roll taped in the thirties, and intersperses virtuosic renditions of sixteen numbers—all packed into little more than an hour. Pianist Morten Gunnar Larsen complements him capably at the keyboard.

**Rainbow & Stars,** 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Not to be confused with its richer cousin, the Rainbow Room, which is just down the hall. There, you'll find expansive Art Deco glitter; here, intimate nineties glitter. The performers, with their backs to the window, have to compete with a view of the Hudson, the George Washington Bridge, and beyond. MARY CLEERE HARAN will be here through the end of January.

**Sounds of Brazil,** 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut decorated with a fruit-and-bamboo motif and dedicated to such things as calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. S.O.B.'s dance floor is always jumping with Rastas and N.Y.U. students, and there's always someone onstage shouting "Put your hands in the air!" The schedule, in part, is: Samba Novo (Jan. 7), Frères Dejean (Jan. 8), music from Cabo Verde (Jan. 9), and Afro Andes (Jan. 11). Dining.

**Sweet Basil,** 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—One seldom sees jazz musicians leaning back to back as they kick out the jams, or craning their necks to harmonize into a mike. That's not to say that they don't interact onstage, but they're usually more subtle about it than rockers are. The nod, the glance, the faint smile are more common gestures, and this brown-toned ski chalet of a jazz club is a fine place to study such group dynamics. Pianist MC COY TYNER leads a trio for the next two weeks. Tyner's playing alternates from the thunderous and showy to the lyrical and understated, and it's only a part of the package; his partners—bassist AVERY SHARPE and drummer AARON SCOTT—are with him every step of the way. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter MILES EVANS is in action on Mondays. Dining.

**Time Café,** 380 Lafayette St.. (533-7000)—Hidden inside this sleek and trendy restaurant is a two-story club called Fez. Upstairs is a sumptuous Moroccan bar-and-lounge appointed with satin couches, mosaic tables, and Arabic-style fixtures. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain by comparison, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. The MINGUS BIG BAND packs them in every Thursday. The fourteen-piece ensemble, directed by saxophonists CRAIG HANDY and ALEX FOSTER, concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of its catalyst, Charles Mingus. Dining.

**Village Vanguard,** 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." The MICHEL PETRUCCIANI quartet is here through Jan. 10. The VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA holds sway on Mondays.

**Wetlands,** 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—This groovy young club's bookings manager recently defected to the Ritz, so it will be interesting to see what happens to the music lineup. Wetlands is usually thought of as a Deadhead hangout, and has been the launching pad for a generation of young New York bands like Blues Traveler and the Spin Doctors. Shows here can be absurdly sweaty and tight—the club seems to have a hard time turning people away—and it can be hard to get a view of the stage. Still, Wetlands is such a maze of a place that there's always some mellow corner to retire to. Second Step is in on Jan. 6. Jan. 7 belongs to Shockra, and Jan. 9 to Max Creek. FRANKLIN TURNPIKE will turn up on Jan. 12.

**Zinno,** 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy, awninged eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and always wondered about. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. Pianist KIRK LIGHTSEY and bassist CECIL MC BEE are here through Jan. 9. JOHN BUNCH (piano), JAY LEONHART (bass), and BUCKY PIZZARELLI (guitar) will take the helm on Jan. 11.

### EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

Burlesque is no longer the exclusive domain of dirty old men, certainly not when there are plenty of dirty young men around who are faster at grabbing the good seats. The Gaiety Theatre (201 West 46th Street), for example, began its renaissance at least a year before the famous little blonde girl put the Times Square male burlesque house in her silver spiral notebook, and if "Babes in Boyland," the Bone Boys' recent midnight presentation there, is any indication, the renaissance continues. Goldfinger's (Eleventh Avenue at 27th Street) celebrated its first anniversary last month, with a clientele whose parents' idea of fun had probably been to tuck the kids into bed and then bring out the Sophie Tucker records.

What's coming down the runway these days? It's reminiscent of neither the mythic blowsy stripper with a heart of gold nor the greasy-haired, peach-fuzzed street kid. Goldfinger's girls are smack-into-the-wall knockouts; Gaiety guys know the layout of the local gym better than the floor plan of their own apartment. What's most striking about the Gaiety, though, is that the dancers hanging out there now seem to be enjoying themselves. (One Boyland Babe hovered aggressively over the runway's edge, causing a soon-to-be-smiling man to lean back so far that he broke his chair.)

Upon exiting the Gaiety, the Bone Boys passed a family going back to the Marriott from a viewing of the Rockefeller Center tree. "Can you imagine the size of the presents you could fit under that thing?" Mother asked. The Bone Boys nodded in unison.

### IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

**Big Apple Circus**—Winding down its annual holiday engagement, which comes to a close on Jan. 10. Featuring the Flying Egorov Troupe, from Russia; a contortionist named Tunga, from Mongolia; Johnny Peers and his dog act; and equestrienne Katja Schumann, among others. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. For information about show times and tickets, call 268-0055.)

**Bread and Puppet Theatre**—Presenting "Nativity 1992." (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Jan. 6-10 at 7:30 and 9:30.)

**"Gold"**—A performance piece by John Fleming and Louise Smith, of the Otrabanda Company. (Downtown Art Co., 64 E. 4th St. 732-1227. Jan. 6-9 at 8 and Jan 10 at 5. Through Jan. 17.)

**High Heeled Women**—The authors of "From Here to Maternity" and of "Plain Jane Works Out" preside over a benefit evening of comedy, dance, and music, all by women. Performers include Ellen Foley, Zora Rasmussen, Shigeko, and Andrea Woods. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Jan. 11 at 8.)

**P.S. 122**—Jan. 7-10 at 7:30: Actress/performance artist Lisa Kron recounts "101 Humiliating Stories." Through Jan. 31. . . . ¶ Jan. 7-10 at 9: Choreographer Sally Silvers presents a new solo piece, "Small Room," and two new group works, "Exwhyzee" and "Elegy." (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

## ART

### *Auto Exotic*

In Peter Cain's paintings (Marks, 1018 Madison Avenue, at 79th Street; through January 28), automobiles like the Mercedes 500SL and the Bugatti EP 110 appear as de-luxe mutants. The original showroom images of the cars have been sliced up on Cain's drawing board and reassembled in such a way as to suggest a faintly sinister, if timely, reversal of the process by which limos are "stretched." These disconcerting contractions were then projected onto canvas, rendered in oil (with some taped edges), and set against sleek, painterly grounds that would very likely get an A from Clement Greenberg.

In one outstanding work, the largest in the show, a blue bumper hits the road upside down, in a highway landscape of refracted planes in fruity pinks and peaches that evoke Poons, Noland, and the whole mandarin color-field gang of the nineteen-sixties. In addition to these ties, there are strong echoes—in Cain's high-resolution technique and in his very subject—of that abstract movement's contemporaneous flip side, hyperrealism. Likewise, the artist's relation to Pop is not at all a subtle one; his debt to Rosenquist in particular is apparent throughout.

Less obvious, perhaps, is what Cain makes of his customized auto bodies. His galleryful of seductive crippled vehicles, in fact, find their exact counterparts in Alan Turner's lyrically painted mutations of flesh and faces. Cain's cars are likely to rack up a lot of mileage in the new year.

### MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**Metropolitan Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Fashion and History: A Dialogue" is the first installation in the redesigned Costume Institute. . . . ¶ Part 2 of "The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang" explores the pioneering abstractionist's influence on artists of the later seventeenth century. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ "Drawing for Design" includes sketches and finished pieces by designers, architects, and artists from Christopher Dresser to Robert Venturi. . . . ¶ "The Royal City of Susa: Ancient Near Eastern Treasures in the Louvre." Two hundred works in copper, bronze, stone, and clay. Through March 7. . . . ¶ The show of paintings, drawings, and sculpture from the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille, includes works by Rubens, Goya, Delacroix, van Gogh, Fra Bartolommeo, and others. Through Jan. 17. . . . ¶ Twenty-five examples of elaborately inscribed and decorated medieval Islamic garments. Through March 14. . . . ¶ Two series of color photographs by Shomei Tomatsu: one depicts *Sakura*, or cherry-blossom time; the other, flotsam and jetsam washed up on a beach. Through Jan. 31. . . . ¶ The museum's Christmas tree and Neapolitan crèche are on view. Through Jan. 10. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

**Museum of Modern Art,** 11 W. 53rd St.—The Matisse retrospective is organized into seven sections that are at once chronological and thematic. The most powerful section, over all, is the one covering the years 1913 to 1917, which is called "Abstraction and Experimentation." A big, subdued, rigorous Jungian masterpiece called "Bathers by a River" (completed in 1916), for instance, from the Art Institute of Chicago, is the great coup de theatre of this rich but surprisingly unrevealing exhibition. There are, however, some happy rediscoveries, such as a number of Matisse's exercises in bold contours and high style from the early forties—paintings like "The Rumanian Blouse," which may have inspired a collection or two by Saint Laurent, and several still-lifes and interiors with figures against black gridded grounds. Some of the great late cutouts are disappointing. In fact, this exhibition doesn't begin or end with a bang. Through Jan. 19. (Plan wisely; call 708-9850 for ticket information. Tickets can be purchased in advance, and a limited number of same-day tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis.)... ¶ Since many of the museum's major works are on reciprocal loan to other museums in exchange for Matisses, the museum has chosen to reinstall a number of its remaining paintings, sculptures, and other objects in a nonchronological fashion. There are several informative passages, such as Picasso's sexually charged "Demoiselles" and de Kooning's fierce "Woman I" displayed next to Louise Bourgeois' defiant, ironically erect "Sleeping Figure." Likewise, there is a welcome mixing of mediums, such as Bellmer's "La Poupée," a book with surrealistic pictures of body parts, displayed beside a realistic Robert Gober leg. Still, many of the juxtapositions are far less revealing than they were presumably intended to be.... ¶ "The Artist and the Book in Twentieth-Century Italy." Through Feb. 16. (Museum hours through Jan. 19: open Sundays through Tuesdays, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Wednesdays, 12 to 6; Thursdays, 10:30 to 9.)

**GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM,** Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed through Jan. 7. The Thannhauser Collection will be on view starting Jan. 8. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

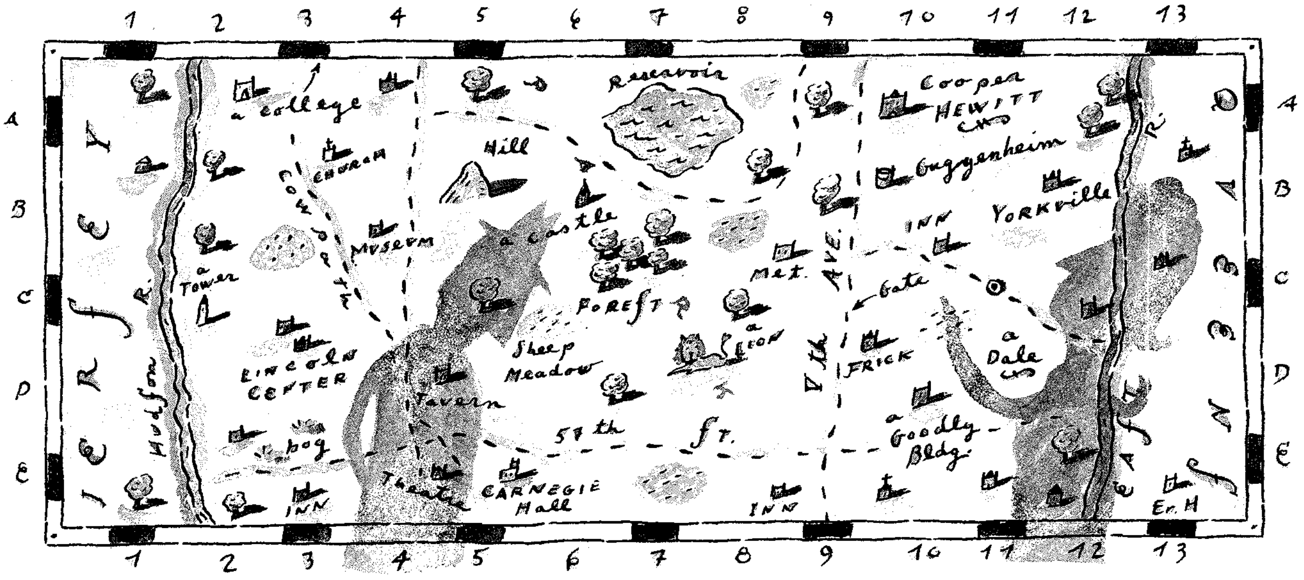
**GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO,** 575 Broadway—Works that Robert Rauschenberg made between 1949 and 1954, before the appearance of the groundbreaking combines. As a young man working in New York, at North Carolina's Black Mountain College, and in Europe and North Africa, where he travelled for seven months with his friend Cy Twombly, Rauschenberg was already doing almost everything: painting, sculpture, collage, and photography, of course, but also Conceptual art works *avant la lettre* and all sorts of experiments in mediums ranging from newsprint to blueprints. His work has influenced many artists of his own generation (Warhol, Johns) and of the two that have arisen since (Rosenquist; David Salle and Cady Noland). Through Jan. 25.... ¶ "Marc Chagall and the Jewish Theatre." Chagall's murals for the State Jewish Chamber Theatre, in Moscow, are in many ways ambitious, but they are not especially satisfying. They are notable for their delicacy, for their mixture of figurative and abstract forms, and for the essentially modest scale of their elements. Through Jan. 17. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings until 10.)

**WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART,** Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Agnes Martin didn't achieve her mature style until the early sixties, when she was in her late forties. It is the paradox of her career that she has made soft, delicate paintings in a rigid grid format. Within her narrow vocabulary, Martin explores infinite variation. Though each painting is a perfect distillation of her œuvre, the more you see, the more you want to see. Through Jan. 31.... ¶ In providing a historical context for the Martin show, "The Geometric Tradition in American Art, 1930-1990" includes work by Ellsworth Kelly, Ad Reinhardt, Donald Judd, and Burgoyne Diller. Through Feb. 14.... ¶ A retrospective of paintings by Jean-Michel Basquiat. Through Feb. 14.... ¶ "Photography: Expanding a Collection" includes works by Cindy Sherman, Sally Mann, and Ana Mendieta. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

**BROOKLYN MUSEUM,** Eastern Parkway—"Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism." Bazille (1841-70) lived only long enough to brush up against early Impressionism. He was an exact contemporary of Renoir and Monet, and he worked closely with them when he was a truant medical student in Paris. Bazille's virtuosity as an Impressionist is perhaps most evident in "The Rose Laurels," a small painting of flowering bushes which, though signed, is obviously unfinished. There are, however, at least three outstanding Bazilles in Brooklyn, and they have in common a theme surprising for that heyday of the female nude: "The Improvised Field Hospital" is a portrait of Monet, as *homme fatal*, in bed after a minor accident, while "Fisherman with a Net" and "Summer Scene (Bathers)" are not only the cool Bazille's most impassioned works but also bracing homoerotic retorts to everyone else's *déjeuners sur l'herbe.* Through Jan. 24.... ¶ "Max Weber: The Cubist Decade, 1910-20." In Stieglitz's circle of early American modernists, Weber was the textbook Cubist. This Russian émigré went to Paris during the latter half of the first decade, where he befriended Rousseau and was aesthetically smitten by Picasso. He became an omniderivative acolyte, emulating not only the Cubists but also the Futurists and, to a lesser extent, the Delaunays. But Weber is also credited with making Cubist works that uniquely captured the atmosphere of New York. A few of these are included in this show. Compared with their French forebears, they are stiff and uncertain, but when considered in relation to the work of the Synchromists, with their mystical swirls that were no less dependent on the French, they are seen to possess a uniquely American sensibility. Through Jan. 10. (A complementary show of early works by Weber is at Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St., through Jan. 23.)... ¶ Sixty sculptures by Auguste Rodin have been reinstalled in the Cantor Gallery. Among the works here are two independent pieces from "The Gates of Hell"; maquettes, studies, and four full-scale figures from "The Burghers of Calais"; and several versions of "Balzac."... ¶ "Dame of the Narrows" (1976), a large-scale sculpture of the Staten Island ferry arriving at the Manhattan terminal, by Red Grooms, Mimi Gross, and the Ruckus Construction Company, is on view in the lobby. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY,** Central Park W. at 79th St.—"This Is the American Earth," an exhibition that highlights environmental concerns through landscape photographs by such artists as Ansel Adams, Margaret Bourke-White, Eliot Porter, Jacob Riis, and Minor White. Through Jan. 24.... ¶ The museum's annual origami tree remains on view through Jan. 11. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

**COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM,** Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"The Power of Maps." Navigating your way through this huge show of more than four hundred maps (the earliest is from 1500 B.C.) can seem like a daunting task. But be adventurous, and you'll find Native American star charts, Italian globes, Aboriginal "Dreaming" maps, survey maps of the Pyramids, and much more. Through March 7.... ¶ "Revolution, Life, and Labor," a show of two hundred and fifty Soviet porcelain plates,



"The Power of Maps" at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum

ERIC HANSEN

vessels, and sculptures, from the Bolshevik Revolution to *glasnost*. . . . ¶ "From Background to Foreground" examines Jean-Baptiste Réveillon's eighteenth-century wallpaper designs and includes samples of the arabesque pattern, woodblocks, paper, pigment, and decorative objects. . . . ¶ A show of drawings, prints, textiles, and wall coverings by designers and architects who have died of AIDS. Through Feb. 28. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

**Japan Society,** 333 E. 47th St.—A display of decorative metalwork, cloisonné, and lacquerware from the Meiji period (1868-1912). Through Jan. 10. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

**Morgan Library,** 29 E. 36th St.—Dickens' manuscript for "A Christmas Carol," a hundred and forty-nine years old this winter, is on display in the entrance hall. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ More than a hundred medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscripts from the Breslauer Collection are on view. . . . ¶ "Printers and Miniaturists" shows off the finest in late-fifteenth-century Venetian illuminated books. . . . ¶ In "Thomas Jefferson: Tranquil Pursuits and Stormy Politics," one can see "Summary View of the Rights of America" (1774), his first published work; the library's copy of the first printing of the Declaration of Independence; personal letters to Elbridge Gerry (later v.p. under Madison); and letters to his daughter Martha. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

**New York Public Library,** Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Four hundred years' worth of prints and photographs portraying Native Americans. Included are works by Timothy O'Sullivan, George Catlin, Edward S. Curtis, and Gertrude Käsebier. Through Jan. 30. (Third Floor Gallery.). . .¶ In "New Worlds, Ancient Texts," more than two hundred manuscripts, maps, atlases, globes, books, and prints tell the story of the Old World and the New World—how they came to meet, their courtship, their quarrels, and their inevitable marriage. Through Jan. 9. (Gottesman Hall.). . . ¶ Maps and atlases of yesteryear, in "Mapping the New World." Through Jan. 9. (Edna Barnes Salomon Room.). . . ¶ On view in the Berg Collection are fifty manuscripts, including fragments from "Oliver Twist," "Tropic of Cancer," "To the Lighthouse," and "Ada." Through March 13. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

**P.S. 1 Museum,** 46-01 21st St., Long Island City—"Postcards from Alphaville: Jean-Luc Godard in Contemporary Art, 1963-92." This show explores the avant-gardist's influence on artists from Barbara Bloom and Donald Baechler to Allan Ruppersberg and Mary Weatherford. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ In "7 Rooms / 7 Shows," this institution's traditional emphasis on emerging artists shifts to emerging curators. The whole second floor thus becomes the site for seven distinct group shows. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ A new series of photographs by Clegg & Guttmann titled "From the Index of Commissioned and Non-Commissioned Photographic Portraits." Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ "The Bells," Donald Lipski's new sculpture-with-sound installation. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ Three sound-and-video installations by Berlin artists Hans-Peter Kuhn, Ulrich Eller, and Niko Tenten. Through Jan. 10. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

**Studio Museum in Harlem,** 144 W. 125th St.—"Wifredo Lam and His Contemporaries, 1938-52." More than a hundred paintings by a Cuban modernist of African, Chinese, and Spanish ancestry. Lam was an early multi-culti, the first artist to turn the sometimes condescending primitivism of modern art on its ear. Through April 11. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

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## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

*(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)*

**Richard Diebenkorn / Andy Warhol** (1930-87)—Eleven paintings (1968 to 1985) from the Ocean Park series. Diebenkorn, along with de Kooning, is the last artist left who sustains the grand authority of American abstract painting of the fifties. He has, however, taken some ribbing for essentially making the same painting over and over, which in a certain sense is a legitimate accusation. But, as this show demonstrates, there is also great variation in his paintings. Through Jan. 19. / A show of drawings from the mid-eighties. Through Jan. 9. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.... ¶ A show of late paintings by Warhol is at Gagosian's downtown space. See SoHo listings.)

## GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

**"Josef Hoffmann: Designs"**—Two hundred drawings and a hundred objects by the designer, architect, and co-founder of the *Wiener Werkstätte.* The wide range of work includes furniture, architectural models, fabrics, and bookbindings. All of the pieces are on loan from the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts. Through Jan. 23. (IBM Gallery of Science and Art, Madison Ave. at 56th St.)

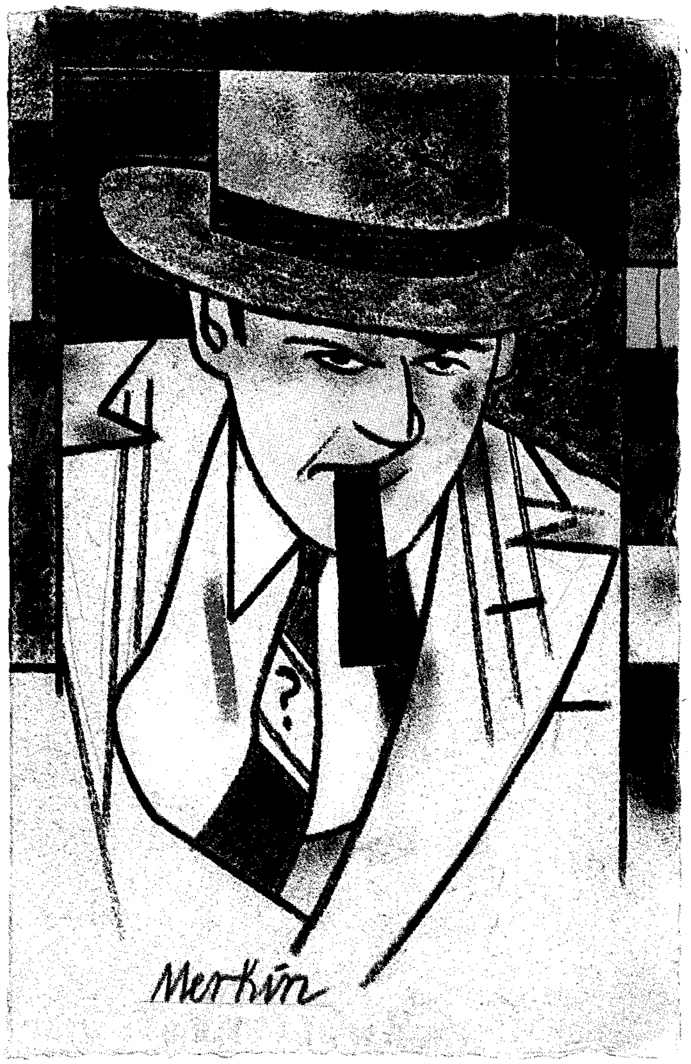
**Short List**—**richard baker,** Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 16); **stuart davis,** Ulysses, 41 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 23); **leon kroll,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 9); **giorgio morandi,** Baldacci-Daverio, 41 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 30); **zoran music,** Krugier, 41 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 30); **fairfield porter,** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 23); **robert ryman,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 9); **art spiegelman,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 9); **leonard stokes and joe nicastri,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Jan. 9); **max weber,** Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Jan. 23).

## GALLERIES—SoHo

**Karen Finley**—This performance artist, whose stage work is always about one sort of oppression or another, has created an AIDS memorial that shares many of the qualities that give the AIDS quilt its power: anti-monumentality, impermanence, fragility, and a dependence on the combined efforts of innumerable people. In the basement of this gallery, Finley has placed mounds of sand into which visitors are invited to write the names of the dead and then to erase them in a private, ritualized act of release. Through Jan. 9. (Lipton, 67 Prince St.)

**Mike Kelley**—The artist has scoured the world of wacko do-it-yourself catalogues for rooms of confinement, torture tables, and even an old-fashioned deep-colonics board. There's a whistle-while-you-work hominess to these spare-time perversities. "Private Address System," a foil to all the recent discussions about free speech, is the defining piece of the show. It consists of a portable toilet with two microphones in the bowl producing continuous wailing feedback. Through Jan. 9. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

**Andrew Lord**—This forty-two-year-old English potter has ranged widely among his medium's conventions, sometimes exercising Cubist control, at other times invoking the aesthetic of homeliness perfected by Far Eastern ceramic traditions and, in this country, by George Ohr. In this show, there are no right angles and straight lines but instead a sort of wonky, baroque classicism and, for a change, a lot of color glazes—roseate tones, iridescent beiges, deep green, blazing turquoise. Through Jan. 9. (65 Thompson Street Gallery.)



*Weegee at the Borden gallery*

RICHARD MERKIN

**Ken Lum**—Perhaps in an attempt to duplicate the effect of his early furniture pieces, this artist has tossed humongous cushions about the gallery in a casually violent way. Their sheer scale is momentarily startling, but works of art they're not. And his attempts at painting substitutes—primed white canvases with little photos silk-screened onto them—come off like second-rate neo-conceptualism. Through Jan. 16. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

**Odd Nerdrum**—Pretentious, ponderous, operatic works so thickly encrusted toward the bottom it's as if the weight of all that schmalz had caused a landslide on the canvas. These are clearly tongue-in-cheek works, with their flabby, deformed, and deranged heroes, but irony is little recompense for the plodding manpower that so obviously went into their making. Through Jan. 16. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

**Gerhard Richter**—Two small canvases, and a goodly sampling of works on paper from the past several years. The abstract watercolors are quite beautiful, but especially engaging are some small pencil drawings that map out the anatomy of the artist's large abstract paintings. There is also a group of mysterious black-and-white photographic works comprising murky multiple exposures of the artist in his studio. They were made at the same time as his out-of-focus grisaille paintings of the alleged suicide of the leaders of the Baader-Meinhof gang. Through Jan. 30. (Nolan-Eckman, 560 Broadway.)

**Andy Warhol** (1930-87)—A fascinating show of an essentially unknown body of work. Made shortly before he died, these paintings illustrate the two sides of Warhol: the detached, cool materialist, and the less frequently glimpsed visionary. They also show the influence of the artist's collaboration with Jean-Michel Basquiat—not just in their style (the anatomical chartings, the writing, even the very orthography) but in their youthful vigor and self-obsession. These are among Warhol's most autobiographical works. The images, mostly rooted in advertisements and spanning his entire career, filter his own quarter-century engagement with the media, urban life, and violence through his influence on eighties artists. Through Jan. 30. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.... ¶ A show of related drawings is at Gagosian's uptown space, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St., through Jan. 9.)

**"Ageometry"**—Mary Heilmann, the den mother of post-grid painting, is represented by several lacklustre works, while Karin Davie, the new arrival, seems afflicted with too much energy. Her nearly identical works are made of big wavy horizontal lines, unbroken from the top to the bottom of the canvas. They are so monotonous they could make you seasick. The charmer is a huge, wacky painting by Gary Lang, composed of horizontal and vertical ribbons of color that were clearly crosshatched by hand; by the time Lang reached the edge of his grid—whoops!—he had goofed big time: his grid slants like the tower of Pisa, and he has left this massive matrix of undulating color in a welcome state of imperfection. Though Jan. 9. (Klein, 594 Broadway.)

**"La Tinaia" / "Hands of Time"**—Recent art by the patients of San Salvi, a psychiatric hospital in Florence, Italy. (La Tinaia—"the vat-room"—is the name of the hospital's center for expressive activity, chosen because the group's studio is an old wine-making house.) There's a full range of styles here, from the intense color juxtapositions of the expressionist to the single-mindedness of someone who draws the same object over and over until the paper is full. / A different kind of obsessiveness is visible downstairs, where work made by men in various American prisons is on view. Most of the drawing is fascinating, if amateurish. The subject matter is rather limited: tattoos, skulls, devils, barred windows, executions. The work of a lifer like Daniel (Stretch) Watson is especially disturbing, whether in his drawings of semis buried in canyons or in his demonically glaring self-portraits. There are objects made out of the few raw materials at hand: toilet paper, soap, and small rocks (some carved with the intricacy of netsuke); and there are also bags and crucifixes and photo albums made from old cigarette packs—these guys can do a lot with a Camel wrapper. Through Jan. 23. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

**Short List**—**jennifer bartlett,** Cooper, 149 Wooster St. (through Jan. 16); **robert beauchamp,** Zarre, 154 Wooster St. (through Jan. 16); **dale chihuly,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through Jan. 23); **keith haring,** Shafrazi, 130 Prince St. (through Jan. 16); **saul steinberg,** Pace, 142 Greene St. (through Jan. 9).

# PHOTOGRAPHY

## *Eureka!*

THE mixture of nineteenth-century photographs now on view at the James Danziger gallery (415 West Broadway; through January 23) makes for a good roam. This is less a formal exhibition than a sharing of the results of Danziger's own education in the first fifty years of the medium. There are works by some of the big names of the period, such as Félix Teynard, Julia Margaret Cameron, Carleton Watkins, and Adam Clark Vroman, but there are also plenty of other images, produced by photographers who have not yet been canonized. In fact, the mishmash aspect of the show gives the viewer the same kind of fun in making discoveries that Danziger has had delving into the period. There are many works by anonymous photographers, and some of these are as fine as the pedigreed masterpieces. The seemingly inexhaustible supply of possible discoveries, of course, is what makes photography so addictive. One of the real finds in Danziger's selection is a kooky object by one Rudolf Eickemeyer. It's an 1896 platinum print that's been pressed into three-dimensional relief. The image is of a woman, her hair implausibly thick and her body on its way to being a Botero beauty's. It's as kitschy as can be.

**GUSTAVE LE GRAY** (1820-82) / **ROBERT ADAMS**—Two groups of seascapes, taken about a hundred and forty years apart, that are breathtaking, both for their drama and for their technical beauty. In Le Gray's luminous images, the horizon line stimulates the viewer's imagination. Robert Adams' contemporary pictures were shot in the region of Oregon where the Columbia River meets the Pacific. They are so articulate that the waves seem to undulate in their frames. Also on view is a Le Gray series of luscious photographs, all in different tones, of Millet's copy of the "Mona Lisa." Through Jan. 30. (Lowinsky, 575 Broadway.)

**WEEGEE** (1899-1968)—He still gets around. This show's title, "Portrait of a City," is taken from Weegee's own designation for images he felt typified New York, and all of the works are from his personal collection. Through Jan. 16. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

**"NEW PHOTOGRAPHY 8"**—This MOMA series has dramatically expanded, and now includes eight artists instead of the customary three. The work varies widely in approach and in strength. It's hard to understand, for instance, why Mary Miss has been included, since her architectural photographs seem to be just travel versions of similar work done by another sculptor/photographer, Gordon Matta-Clark, more than twenty years ago. But it's wonderful to see the imagery of Darrel Ellis getting its due. His use of his father's family pictures makes for autobiographical works that are both tender and upsetting. Through Jan. 12. (Museum of Modern Art.)

**"TROUBLED TIMES. . ."**—This show features three artists whose street photography is legendary—Lisette Model, Louis Faurer, and Leon Levinstein. Almost all the works were shot in New York. Model's forties wartime pictures are images of loss, and of emotionally and physically wounded people, and Faurer's images, many of them from the mid-fifties, depict urban down-and-outs. Levinstein's photographs, from the late fifties and early sixties, document the early stages of the urban alienation and abandonment that have since become so widespread in the city. Through Jan. 31. (Sander, 105 Hudson St.)

**SHORT LIST**—**ELLEN CAREY**, Baum, 588 Broadway (through Jan. 9); **JEAN KALLINA** and **JAN HENLE**, Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 16); **HIROJI KUBOTA**, International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through Jan. 31); **MARTIN MUNKACSI** and **LILLIAN BASSMAN**, Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. (through Jan. 16); **RODNEY SMITH**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through Jan. 16).

# MUSIC

## *Some Assembly Required*

TO lay listeners, the process of assembling a complicated piece of classical music must sometimes appear mysterious, even magical—and at the final levels of inspiration it is surely so. The process can seem to resemble a carpenter's shop, a sculptor's studio, an aerobics class, an assembly line—even an ant colony. There's no better way to see the inside workings in microscopic detail than by attending one of Robert Shaw's choral workshops at Carnegie Hall, and those nonprofessionals who had the foresight to pre-register as auditors for the week will have just such an opportunity, beginning on January 11. This year, Mr. Shaw takes on the Berlioz Requiem, and the public will be able to hear the culmination of the workshop in a concert performance on January 17. For about forty-five years now, the name Robert Shaw on a record or program has meant that the choral singing will be rich, uncannily smooth, rhythmically precise, clearly enunciated; in these workshops (and in the video spinoffs that Carnegie Hall markets), one can watch him painstakingly putting it together from the first detail to the last. Nor are the final levels of inspiration unknown to Mr. Shaw.

### OPERA

**METROPOLITAN OPERA**—**LA BOHÈME**, with Leona Mitchell, Diana Soviero, Richard Leech, and Christopher Robertson; conducted by John Fiore. (Jan. 6 at 8.). . . With Leona Mitchell, Diana Soviero, Franco Farina, and Christopher Robertson; John Fiore. (Jan. 9 and Jan. 12 at 8.). . . **SEMIRAMIDE**, with Lella Cuberli, Marilyn Horne, Stanford Olsen, and Simone Alaimo; Ion Marin. (Jan. 7 at 7:30.). . . **JENŮFA**, with Gabriela Beňačková, Leonie Rysanek, Gary Lakes, and Peter Kazaras; James Conlon. (Jan. 8 and Jan. 11 at 8.). . . **TOSCA**, with Anna Tomowa-Sintow, Lando Bartolini, and James Morris; Christian Badea. (Jan. 9 at 1:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

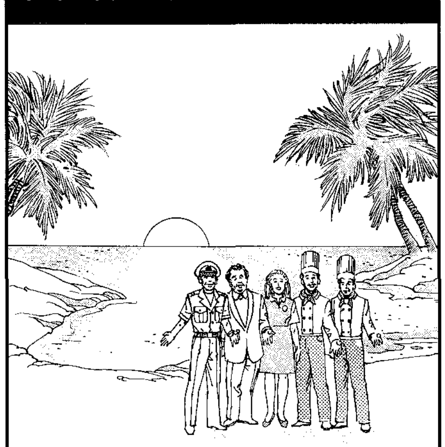
**"SEMELE"**—An acerbic comic opera from the Restoration, with music by John Eccles to a libretto by William Congreve. Staged by Paul Echols, with Dongsok Shin conducting the Mannes Camerata. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Jan. 9 and Jan. 12-13 at 8, and Jan. 10 at 6.)

### ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

**NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC**—Kurt Masur conducts Mozart's Symphony No. 23, Haydn's D-Major Cello Concerto (with Yo-Yo Ma), Oskar Morawetz's "Memorial to Martin Luther King, Jr.," and Dvořák's Symphony No. 8. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Jan. 7-9 at 8 and Jan. 12 at 7:30.)

**GREENWICH VILLAGE SINGERS**—Mark Mangini directs Honegger's "King David," as well as sacred choral compositions by Stravinsky,

SAGAFJORD'S HAWAII & POLYNESIA



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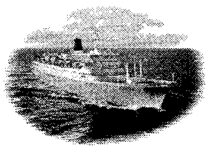
WITH A SPECTACULAR
SCANDINAVIAN CAST.



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## MUSIC—Cont'd

Poulenc, and Fauré (his "Cantique de Jean Racine"). (St. Joseph's Church, 371 Sixth Ave., at Washington Pl. Jan. 8 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

**American Composers Orchestra**—Dennis Russell Davies conducts Chinary Ung's "Inner Voices" and Cindy McTee's "Circuits," as well as two world premières: Chou Wen-Chung's Cello Concerto (with Janos Starker) and Roger Reynolds' "Dreaming." (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Jan. 10 at 3, preceded at 1:45 by a composers' roundtable.)

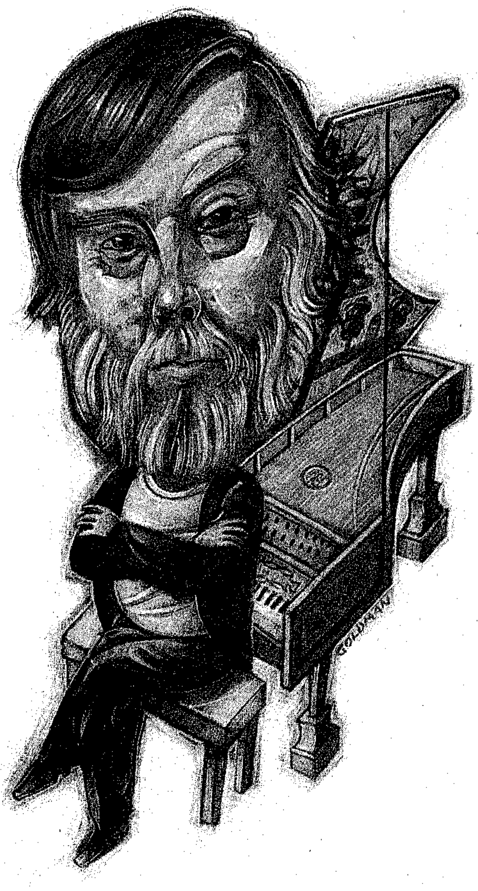
### RECITALS

**Riverside Choral Society**—Patrick Gardner directs Britten's "Saint Nicholas" and two works by the Argentine composer Ariel Ramirez (including his "Misa Criolla"). (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Jan. 6 at 8. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert, which had been originally scheduled for the stormy night of Dec. 11.)

**Bargemusic**—A string trio plays Schubert's one-movement Trio in B-Flat (D. 471), and Christopher O'Riley joins them for piano quartets by Fauré (in G Minor) and Brahms (in C Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Jan. 7 at 7:30 and Jan. 10 at 4.)

**Young Uck Kim and Emanuel Ax**—The violinist and the pianist include on their program sonatas by Brahms (in G Major), Franck, and Tobias Picker (the New York première of his sonata, subtitled "Invisible Lilacs"). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Jan. 8 at 8.)

**Toby Appel**—The violist plays works by Rebecca Clarke, James Frisken, and Bruce Adolphe, following an address by luthier René A. Morel on the construction, acoustics, and sonic possibilities of the viola; sponsored by the New York Viola Society. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. 580-0210. Jan. 10 at 1:30.)



*Gerald Ranck at the Ethical Culture Society*

**Gerald Ranck**—The harpsichordist continues his three-year-long survey of all of Domenico Scarlatti's approximately five hundred and fifty keyboard sonatas. In this installment, he performs twenty-six sonatas (K. 255-K. 280) from the composer's middle period. (Scarlatti's "K-numbers," by the way, refer to a roughly chronological catalogue compiled by the late Ralph Kirkpatrick, and have no connection to the more frequently encountered "K-numbers" assigned by Ludwig Köchel to the works of Mozart.) (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. 874-5210. Jan. 10 at 3.)

**Orion String Quartet**—Performing Mozart's C-Major Quartet (K. 465, the "Dissonance"), Leon Kirchner's Quartet No. 1, and (with the help of violist Ah Ling Neu) Dvořák's Quintet in E-Flat Major, Op. 97. Presented by the Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music. (Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn. Jan. 10 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

**American Chamber Players**—Members of the instrumental ensemble play chamber works by Milhaud and Fauré (his C-Minor Piano Quartet), as well as the New York premières of compositions by Roger Ames and Max Raimi; with soprano Susan Boykin assisting. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Jan. 10 at 5.)

**Essential Music**—Presenting Cage's "Amores," "In a Landscape," and "Five" (this last performed on tuned, blown bottles), as well as works by Kyle Gann, Peter Garland, John Kennedy, William Russell, and Charles Wood. A benefit concert. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Jan. 10 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

**Van Cliburn Competition**—Competitions: love 'em or hate 'em, they play an enormously important role in promoting the careers of young artists. In the high-stakes piano world, none is more influential than the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, held every four years in Fort Worth, Texas. Preliminary screening is already under way for this spring's competition, and, over the course of a week, nearly forty pianists will play fifty-minute programs in New York, each hoping to secure a place among the thirty-five eventual competitors. (Similar screenings are going on in nine other cities around the world.) Members of the audience can be assured of hearing some impressive piano-playing—and, come summer, they may be able to say of the next big winner, "I heard that pianist back when. . . ." (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Jan. 11-12 from 1 to 5 and from 7 to 10. No tickets necessary. Through Jan. 17.)

**Peter Prosser**—Cellist, performing movements from Bach's C-Major Unaccompanied Suite, a G-Major Sonata attributed to Giovanni Battista Sammartini (though its authenticity is widely questioned), and Brahms' E-Minor Sonata; with pianist Mary Jo Pagano. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Jan. 12 at 6. Admission by contribution.)

**William Black**—The pianist performs the Bach-Busoni Chaconne, Poulenc's "Nocturnes," Griffes's Piano Sonata, and Schumann's "Kreisleriana." (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Jan. 12 at 8.)

### JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

**"Highlights in Jazz"**—James Moody, Red Rodney, Christopher Hollyday, Steve Kuhn, David Finck, and Billy Drummond. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Jan. 7 at 8.)

**Frank Lowe**—With James Carter, Carlos Ward, Michael Marcus, and Reggie Nicholson. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Jan. 8 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

**Nana Vasconcelos**—Washington Square Church. Jan. 9 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

**"Lyrics & Lyricists"**—The opening concerts of the series are devoted to E. Y. (Yip) Harburg. With KT Sullivan, Michele Bautier, Steve Elmore, Phillip Officer, Jim Lowe (narrator), and Barry Levitt (pianist). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Jan. 10 at 2:30 and 8, and Jan. 11 at 2 and 8.)

**"Gruppen"**—A new-music series at the Kitchen, which will continue through Jan. 16. Jan. 8: Doctor Nerve and the Soldier String Quartet, Blast (a Dutch quartet, in its American début), and Slash Orchestra (Konrad Kinard and James Lo). . . . ¶ Jan. 9-10 and Jan. 12: La Monte Young & the Forever Bad Blues Band, performing "Young's Dorian Blues in G" and other works. (512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Concerts at 8:30.)

## SPORTS

### *Breaking Fast*

THOUGH the Knicks' Greg Brittenham was originally hired as a strength coach, the team's training staff doesn't focus exclusively on building strength. "Our approach is much more progressive than that," Brittenham says. "We're here to train the total athlete: speed, agility, quickness, power, and nutrition—those are the goals." So, in addition to basketball, a Knicks practice includes about an hour of heavy lifting; hundreds of assorted abdominal reps (the gym-class sit-up was orthopedically kiboshed long ago); vertical-leap drills; and low-impact aerobics—bike riding, StairMastering, and pool running. (Just imagine Charles Oakley, in a life preserver, chugging around the deep end for twenty minutes!) Whatever happened to the simple tortures, like suicide drills? "Oh, occasionally Coach Riley resorts to them," Brittenham admits. "But only as what you could call a punishment, I guess."

The program paid off last season, and so far this year the Knicks have played some of the most tenacious defense in the league. "Last year, we had the lowest injury rate in the N.B.A.," Brittenham said. "We were the only team that started the same five guys every game—pre-, regular, and postseason." As for nutrition, the days of the pre-game candy bar and hot dog are gone. "Before the games, we lay out those high-energy nutrition bars and all kinds of fresh fruit. And sometimes we give the guys bagels."

### HOME TEAMS

**Knicks**—Vs. the Boston Celtics, Jan. 10 at 8.

**Nets**—Vs. the Washington Bullets, Jan. 9 at 7:30.

**Rangers**—Vs. the Ottawa Senators, Jan. 6. . . . ¶ Vs. the Vancouver Canucks, Jan. 11. (Game time, 7:30.)

**Islanders**—Vs. the Vancouver Canucks, Jan. 9. . . . ¶ Vs. the Calgary Flames, Jan. 12. (Game time, 7:35.)

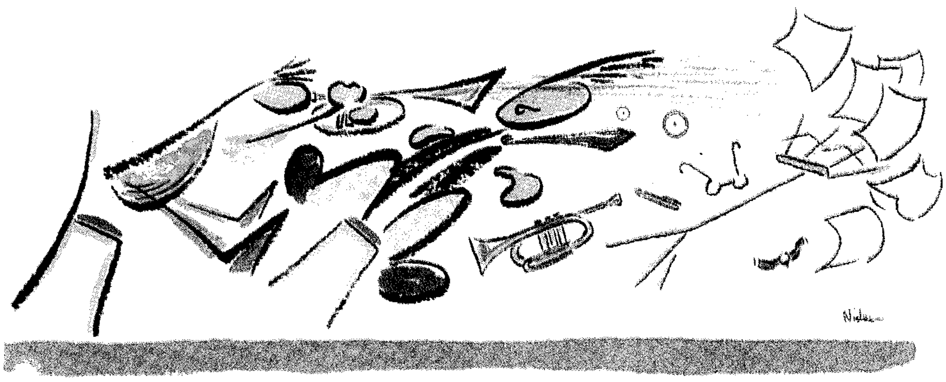
**Devils**—Vs. the Minnesota North Stars, Jan. 6. . . . ¶ Vs. the Ottawa Senators, Jan. 8. . . . ¶ Vs. the Vancouver Canucks, Jan. 12. (Game time, 7:35.)

*(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)*

### RACING

**Horses**—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Mondays through Saturdays at 8 and Tuesdays at 1; Sundays at 6:45. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

BART GOLDMAN



## ABOVE AND BEYOND

### *The Dry Wire*

HARRY SHEARER'S radio program, called "Le Show," began broadcasting in New York last month (on WNYC, from midnight Sundays to 1 A.M. Mondays). "Le Show" originates in Santa Monica, so Shearer, who describes himself as "a real Angeleno," sees this new development as "a kind of karmic payback for the fact that Howard Stern is broadcast in California." After listening to Shearer's eclectic hour of music and political satire and his trademark reading aloud of some of the more inadvertently amusing articles in the nation's trade magazines, it becomes clear that the show bears very little resemblance to Howard Stern's—or anyone else's.

Shearer got into show business early. In 1951, when he was seven, he landed a job with Jack Benny; two years later, he played "the crippled boy on the donkey" in "The Robe"; and by 1968 he was working on his own darkly satirical radio program, "The Credibility Gap." "My role is to sow confusion rather than clarity," he says. "The problem is that nowadays everything is so oversimplified that people think things aren't ambiguous." The problem is also that ambiguity is often lost on producers. In 1980, when he, Rob Reiner, and a few other friends started going to studio executives with the prototype of a "rockumentary" about a fictitious British heavy-metal band called Spinal Tap, they were met with "the blankest stares outside a lobotomy ward." But "This Is Spinal Tap" went on to become a critical success, as did "The Simpsons," for which Shearer does at least twenty voices. But radio is his preferred medium. "You don't have to analyze it, pitch it at meetings, or hope the producer is reading the same newspapers as you are."

**LE RADIO**—You can absorb Harry Shearer's weltanschauung during the wee hours on Mondays. (WNYC/AM820; FM 93.9.)

**WHATEVER FLOATS YOUR BOAT**—The eighty-third annual New York National Boat Show is a sprawling affair where armchair skippers can gaze longingly at a sixty-two-foot yacht, desk-bound sailors can eye catamarans, and serious boaters can compare the horsepower on speedboats. In addition to cutting-edge nautical vessels, there will be remote-control-boat races on a huge pond constructed for the occasion, an exhibit of antique boats, gourmet-galley-cooking demonstrations, waterskiing clinics, and talks about fishing. (Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, Eleventh Ave. between 34th and 39th Sts. Jan. 8, from 10 to 6; Jan. 9, from 10 to 9; Jan. 10, from 11 to 7; and Jan. 11-12, from noon to 9. Through Jan. 17. Tickets at the door on the days of the show.)

**WORDS**—Jan. 7 at 8: Sin Soracco will read from her new novel, "Edge City." (A Different Light, 548 Hudson St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Jan. 11 at 8:15: Charles Wright and Carol Muske will read from their own poetry. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

**TALKS**—Jan. 6 at 6: Folklorist Rayna Green will give a talk titled "I'm Just Glad Columbus Wasn't Looking for Turkey: An Indian Perspective on 1992." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.). . . ¶ Jan. 6 at 6:30: Philip Hamburger will talk about his art collection and how it is informed by his friendships with the artists or familiarity with the scenes they paint. (New York Studio School, 8 W. 8th St. Admission by contribution.). . . ¶ Jan. 6 at 6:30: Jack Flam, Hilton Kramer, and Karen Wilkin will discuss Matisse's work. (Tenri Cultural Center, 575 Broadway. Tickets at the door on the night of the discussion.). . . ¶ Jan. 7 at 6:30: Wynton Marsalis and Peter Martins will talk about their soon-to-be-staged jazz ballet, choreographed by Martins and scored by Marsalis. (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. 875-5299.). . . ¶ Jan. 7 at 6:30: James M. McPherson, author of "Battle Cry of Freedom," will talk about his forthcoming book, "Why They Fought: Combat Motivation in the Civil War," which attempts to describe what it felt like to be a soldier during the Civil War. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the talk.). . . ¶ Jan. 7 at 8: David Kessler will speak about AIDS and cancer. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. Tickets at the door on the night of the talk.). . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 6: Stephen Jay Gould will give a talk titled "Thoughts on the Eight Little Piggies." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.). . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 6:30: Art historian Karen Rubinson will lecture and show slides about Inner Mongolian art and life. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the talk.)

**WALKS AND TOURS**—Jan. 9 at 11: An art tour through SoHo; sponsored by Eye On Art Tours. For more information, call 877-5117. . . . ¶ Jan. 9 at 1: A stroll from City Hall to Battery Park. . . . Jan. 10 at noon: Eat your way through the ethnic history of lower Manhattan; sponsored by Big Onion Walking Tours. For more information, call 439-1090. . . . ¶ Jan. 9-10: Several walks around Greenwich Village, focussing on history and architecture; sponsored by Sidewalks of New York. For more information, call 517-0201.

NISHAN AKGULIAN

THE BOFFINS BAFFLED

What chemistry, we are often asked, takes place in the succulent bosom of the sherry casks where The Macallan lies slumbering for a decade (at least) before it is allowed out to meet the bottle?

The fact is, we do not know.

It is a matter of history, of course, that someone in the last century discovered that whisky ages best in oaken casks which have previously contained sherry (and that today The Macallan is the last malt whisky exclusively to be so matured).

And it is a matter of fact that in goes the translucent stripling spirit. And out comes amber-gold nectar positively billowing with flavour.

But let us take our cue from a party of scientists whom we once invited to explore the matter. '*Magic!*' they exclaimed, swigging their drams in a most unboffinly manner. 'But magic is merely undiscovered science and we'd like to take some home for further investigation.'

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# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

## THE MOVIE HOUSES

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 18.

### EAST SIDE

**Angelika Film Center,** 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Enchanted April" (directed by Mike Newell), with Miranda Richardson.
Theatre 2: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 3: "Peter's Friends" (Kenneth Branagh), with Branagh, Emma Thompson, Rita Rudner, Stephen Fry, and Hugh Laurie.
Theatre 4: "Peter's Friends."
Theatre 5: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 6: "Bad Lieutenant" (Abel Ferrara), with Harvey Keitel.

**Little Theatre,** Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Il Portaborse" (1991, Daniele Luchetti; in Italian).

**Movieland 8th Street Triplex,** 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 3: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).

**Village Theatre VII,** 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 3: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 4: "A River Runs Through It" (Robert Redford), with Craig Sheffer and Brad Pitt.
Theatre 5: "Damage" (Louis Malle), with Jeremy Irons, Juliette Binoche, Miranda Richardson, and Rupert Graves.
Theatre 6: "Forever Young" (†).
Theatre 7: "A Few Good Men" (†).

**Village East Cinemas,** 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "The Distinguished Gentleman" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 2: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (James Foley), with Al Pacino and Jack Lemmon.
Theatre 3: "Waterland" (Stephen Gyllenhaal), with Jeremy Irons
Theatre 4: "Aladdin" (†).
Theatre 5: "Howards End" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins.
Theatre 6: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 7: (Matinées only) "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (Brian Henson); and (evenings only) "Close to Eden" (Nikita Mikhalkov, in Russian).

**19th Street East 6,** B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).
Theatre 2: To be announced.
Theatre 3: "Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce), with Steve Martin.
Theatre 4: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 5: "Chaplin" (†).
Theatre 6: "Aladdin" (†).

**Gramercy,** Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
To be announced.

**Bay Cinema,** 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).

**Murray Hill Cinemas,** 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "The Distinguished Gentleman" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 2: To be announced.
Theatre 3: "Aladdin" (†).
Theatre 4: To be announced.

**34th Street Showplace,** 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 2: "Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce), with Steve Martin.
Theatre 3: "Trespass" (†).

**34th St. East,** 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"A Few Good Men" (†).

**Sutton 1 and 2,** 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The Distinguished Gentleman" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 2: "The Crying Game" (†).

**Gotham Cinema,** 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Hoffa" (†).

**Plaza,** 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Reservoir Dogs" (Quentin Tarantino), with Harvey Keitel.

**Manhattan Twin,** 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Trespass" (†).
Theatre 2: "Trespass" (†).

**59th Street East Cinema,** 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"The Last of the Mohicans" (Michael Mann), with Daniel Day-Lewis.

**Baronet and Coronet,** 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Used People" (Beeban Kidron), with Shirley MacLaine, Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, and Marcello Mastroianni.
Theatre 2: "Toys" (Barry Levinson), with Robin Williams.

**Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue,** 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Aladdin" (†).
Theatre 2: "Damage" (Louis Malle), with Jeremy Irons, Juliette Binoche, Miranda Richardson, and Rupert Graves.
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (Brian Henson); and (evenings only) "Bad Lieutenant" (Abel Ferrara), with Harvey Keitel.

**First & 62nd Cinemas,** 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lorenzo's Oil" (†).
Theatre 3: "Lorenzo's Oil" (†).
Theatre 4: "Scent of a Woman" (†).
Theatre 5: "Scent of a Woman" (†).
Theatre 6: "A River Runs Through It" (Robert Redford), with Craig Sheffer and Brad Pitt.

**Gemini 1 and 2,** 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 2: "Chaplin" (†).

**Beekman,** 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"A Few Good Men" (†).

**New York Twin,** 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 2: "Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce), with Steve Martin, Debra Winger, Lolita Davidovich, and Liam Neeson.

**68th St. Playhouse,** 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Passion Fish" (John Sayles), with Mary McDonnell, Alfre Woodard, and David Strathairn.

**Tower East,** 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Forever Young" (†).

**East 85th Street,** 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce), with Steve Martin, Debra Winger, Lolita Davidovich, and Liam Neeson.

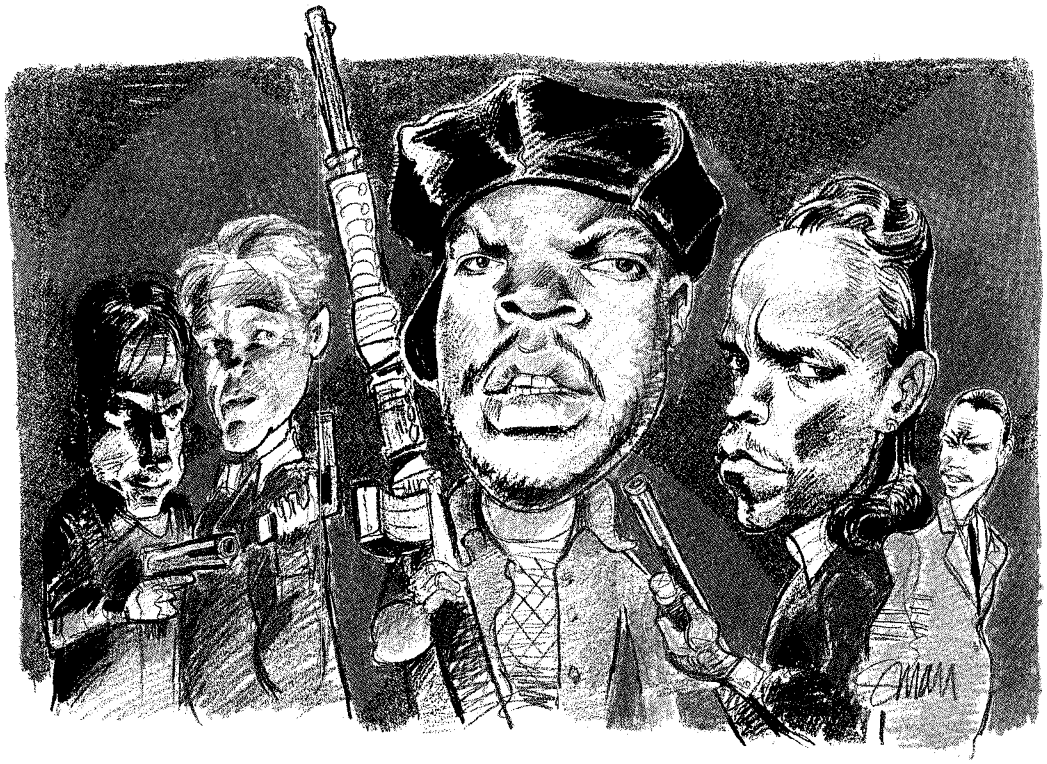
**Park & 86th Street Cinemas,** 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).
Theatre 2: "Toys" (Barry Levinson), with Robin Williams.

**Orpheum VII,** 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (Brian Henson).
Theatre 5: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).
Theatre 6: "Forever Young" (†).
Theatre 7: "Hoffa" (†).

**86th Street East Twin,** 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "The Distinguished Gentleman" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 2: "Aladdin" (†).

### WEST SIDE

**Film Forum,** 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Roy Rogers: King of the Cowboys" (directed by Thys Ockersen), a documentary; and "The Golden Stallion" (1949, William Witney), with Rogers and Dale Evans.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Daddy and the Muscle Academy" (Ilppo Pohjola, in English and Finnish) and "Time Expired" (Danny Leiner).



*Bill Paxton, William Sadler, Ice Cube, Ice T, and Stoney Jackson in "Trespass"*

DAVID SMALL

**Waverly I and 2,** 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Hoffa" (†).
Theatre 2: "Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce), with Steve Martin.
**Art Greenwich Twin,** Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Trespass" (†).
Theatre 2: "Toys" (Barry Levinson), with Robin Williams.
**Quad Cinema,** 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Tous les Matins du Monde" (Alain Corneau, in French), with Jean-Pierre Marielle, Gérard Depardieu, Anne Brochet, and Guillaume Depardieu.
Theatre 2: "Tous les Matins du Monde."
Theatre 3: "Intervista" (Federico Fellini, in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg.
Theatre 4: "The Match Factory Girl" (Aki Kaurismaki).
**Chelsea Cinemas,** 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 3: "Hoffa" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Distinguished Gentleman" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 5: "Hoffa" (†).
Theatre 6: "Toys" (Barry Levinson), with Robin Williams.
Theatre 7: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).
Theatre 8: "Forever Young" (†).
Theatre 9: "Used People" (Beeban Kidron), with Shirley MacLaine, Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, and Marcello Mastroianni.
**23rd St. West Triplex,** 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 2: "Trespass" (†).
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (Brian Henson); and (evenings) "Malcolm X" (†).
**Guild,** 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Aladdin" (†).
**Worldwide Cinemas,** 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 3: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).
Theatre 4: "Enchanted April" (directed by Mike Newell), with Miranda Richardson.
Theatre 5: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (James Foley), with Al Pacino and Jack Lemmon.
Theatre 6: "A River Runs Through It" (Robert Redford), with Craig Sheffer and Brad Pitt.
**Ziegfeld,** 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Hoffa" (†).
**Festival,** 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).
**57th St. Playhouse,** 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Damage" (Louis Malle), with Jeremy Irons, Juliette Binoche, Miranda Richardson, and Rupert Graves.
**Carnegie Hall Cinemas,** 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Peter's Friends" (Kenneth Branagh), with Branagh, Emma Thompson, Rita Rudner, Stephen Fry, and Hugh Laurie.
Theatre 2: "Peter's Friends."
**Fine Arts,** 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Lover" (Jean-Jacques Annaud).
**Cinema 3,** 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Howards End" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins.
**Columbus Circle,** B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Forever Young" (†).
**62nd & Broadway,** 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Used People" (Beeban Kidron), with Shirley MacLaine, Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, and Marcello Mastroianni.
**Lincoln Plaza Cinemas,** B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Tous les Matins du Monde" (Alain Corneau, in French), with Jean-Pierre Marielle, Gérard Depardieu, Anne Brochet, and Guillaume Depardieu.
Theatre 2: "Indochine" (Régis Wargnier, in French), with Catherine Deneuve.
Theatre 3: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 6: "Indochine."
**Regency,** B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Toys" (Barry Levinson), with Robin Williams.
**84th Street Sixplex,** B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Chaplin" (†).
Theatre 2: To be announced.
Theatre 3: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 4: "Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce), with Steve Martin.
Theatre 5: "Aladdin" (†).
Theatre 6: "A Few Good Men" (†).
**Metro Cinema I and 2,** B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (Brian Henson); and (evenings) "Howards End" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins.
Theatre 2: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).
**Olympia I and II,** B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).
Theatre 2: "Trespass" (†).

## TIMES SQUARE AREA

**Criterion Center,** B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Trespass" (†).
Theatre 2: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 4: "Trespass" (†).
Theatre 5: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 7: "Toys" (directed by Barry Levinson), with Robin Williams.
**Embassy 1,** B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Distinguished Gentleman" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eddie Murphy.
**Embassy 2, 3, and 4,** 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (Brian Henson).
Theatre 2: "Bad Lieutenant" (Abel Ferrara), with Harvey Keitel.
Theatre 3: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).
**Astor Plaza,** 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce), with Steve Martin.
**National Twin,** B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Few Good Men" (†).

## REVIVAL HOUSES

**Film Forum 2,** 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through Jan. 7: "Wise Blood" (1979, directed by John Huston), with Brad Dourif, Ned Beatty, Harry Dean Stanton, and Amy Wright; and "The Dead" (1987, John Huston), with Anjelica Huston and Donal McCann.
Jan. 8-10: "Dinner at Eight" (1933, George Cukor), with Jean Harlow, John Barrymore, Lionel Barrymore, Marie Dressler, and Billie Burke; and "The Man Who Came to Dinner" (†).
Jan. 11: "The Royal Family of Broadway" (†); and "Once in a Lifetime" (†).
From Jan. 12: The Petrified Forest" (1936, Archie Mayo), with Leslie Howard, Bette Davis, and Humphrey Bogart; and "The Man with Two Faces" (1934, Archie Mayo), with Edward G. Robinson, Louis Calhern, Mary Astor, Ricardo Cortez, and Mae Clarke.
**Theatre 80 St. Marks,** 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Jan. 6: "Monty Python's The Meaning of Life" (1983, Terry Jones); and "Time Bandits" (1981, Terry Gilliam).
Jan. 7: "The Tall Target" (1951, Anthony Mann), with Dick Powell, Paula Raymond, Adolphe Menjou, Ruby Dee, and Will Geer; and "Cornered" (1945, Edward Dmytryk), with Dick Powell and Walter Slezak.
Jan. 8-9: "A Streetcar Named Desire" (1951, Elia Kazan), with Vivien Leigh, Marlon Brando, Karl Malden, and Kim Hunter; and "The Long, Hot Summer" (1958, Martin Ritt), with Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Anthony Franciosa, Orson Welles, Lee Remick, and Angela Lansbury.
Jan. 10: "The Getaway" (†); and "The Thomas Crown Affair" (see page 18).
Jan. 11: "Band of Outsiders" (1964, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Anna Karina, Sami Frey, and Charles Brasseur; and "Breathless" (1959, Godard; in French), with Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo.
Jan. 12: "The Outsiders" (1983, Francis Ford Coppola), with C. Thomas Howell, Matt Dillon, Ralph Macchio, Patrick Swayze, Rob Lowe, and Tom Cruise; and "Rumble Fish" (1983, Coppola), with Dillon, Mickey Rourke, Diane Lane, Dennis Hopper, Diana Scarwid, and Nicolas Cage.

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## FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

**Museum of Modern Art,** Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Jan. 7 at 2:30: "Santa Fe Trail" (1940, directed by Michael Curtiz), with Errol Flynn. . . . ¶ Jan. 7 at 3 and 6: "People, Years, Life" (1991, Yervant Gianskian and Angela Ricci Lucchi), a documentary. . . . ¶ Jan. 7 at 6: "Yankee Doodle Dandy" (1942, Curtiz), with James Cagney. . . . ¶ Jan. 8 at 2:30 and Jan. 10 at 5: "This Is the Army" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 8 at 3 and Jan. 9 at 5: "Rising to the Bait" (1992, Vadim Glowna; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 8 at 6 and Jan. 10 at 2: "Mission to Moscow" (1943, Curtiz), with Walter Huston. . . . ¶ Jan. 8 at 6: "The Terrible Threesome" (1991, Hermine Huntgeburth). . . . ¶ Jan. 9 at 2 and Jan. 11 at 6: "Roughly Speaking" (1945, Curtiz), with Rosalind Russell, Jack Carson, and Robert Hutton. . . . ¶ Jan. 9 at 2:30 and Jan. 10 at 5: "The Wake of Fear" (1991, Jan Ruzicka; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 9 at 5 and Jan. 11 at 2:30: "Janie" (1944, Curtiz), with Joyce Reynolds, Hutton, and Edward Arnold. . . . ¶ Jan. 10 at 2:30: "The Blue Hour" (1991, Marcel Gisler; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 2:30: "White Christmas" (1954, Curtiz), with Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney, Vera-Ellen, and Dean Jagger. . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 6: "Jim Thorpe—All American" (1951, Curtiz), with Burt Lancaster.

**Walter Reade Theatre,** Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Jan. 6 at 2: "The Testament of Dr. Mabuse" (1933, Fritz Lang; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 6 at 4:15: "The 1000 Eyes of Dr. Mabuse" (1960, Lang), with Peter Van Eyck. . . . ¶ Jan. 6 at 6:30 and Jan. 7 at 8: "Spies" (1928, Lang). . . . ¶ Jan. 7 at 2, 4, and 6: "The Night of the Twelve" (1945, Hans Schweikert; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 8 at 2 and 6:30 and Jan. 9 at 8:30: "Closed Circuit" (1983, Rudolf Thome; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 8 at 4:15 and 8:45 and Jan. 9 at 4: "The Man Who Was Sherlock Holmes" (1937, Karl Hartl; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 9 at 6:15 and Jan. 10 at 4 and 7:30: "M" (1932, Lang; in German), with Peter Lorre. . . . ¶ Jan. 11 at 2 and 6: "Where Is Coletti?" (1913, Max Mack). . . . ¶ Jan. 11 at 4 and 8: "The Masked Frog" (1949, Herald Reinl; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 2 and 6:30: "Dr. Crippen on Board" (1942, Erich Engels; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 4 and 8:15: "The Bear of Baskerville" (1915, Harry Piel) and "A Hell of a Reporter" (1929, Ernst Laemmle).

# MOVIES IN BRIEF

**SEE PRECEDING PAGES FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.**

## *The Real McQueen*

Since Kevin Costner's samurai zombie in "The Bodyguard" has been publicized as an homage to Steve McQueen, Costner's younger fans might get the wrong impression of the most original action star of the sixties and early seventies. Costner tends to be robotic these days, especially when he portrays men of violence; McQueen almost always had a distinctive, astringent presence. And, unlike Costner, he didn't force anything—even when he acted out ingratiating characters, he made an audience come to *him*. Alienation, melancholy, and longing, as well as boyish silliness and hot steely desire, pierced through what have been called his "shaggy-dog blue eyes." His expressions were unexpected. You couldn't imagine any other rugged star puffing out his cheeks to indicate confusion or surprise. He had a dangerous-juvenile quality, conveyed in facial shifts as minute as sucking in a lip or crinkling his forehead like a wheedling or worried child.

More than inventing his own style of acting, he appeared to have invented his own unique persona, the way the Great Gatsby did. It was McQueen who should have played Gatsby, as he proved in his off-type role in Norman Jewison's 1968 caper film, 'The Thomas Crown Affair" (playing January 10, at Theatre 80 St. Marks). He savored every change in evening wear as if he were the formidable Jay Gatsby himself. Amazingly, he was as much in his element portraying Crown—a larcenous, self-made Boston millionaire romancing and trying to outsmart Faye Dunaway (a fancy insurance investigator)—as he was in all those movies where his real co-stars were cars and motorcycles.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

**Aladdin**—Spiffy, inventive, and hilarious. The directors, John Musker and Ron Clements, who collaborated on the screenplay with Ted Elliott and Terry Rossio, streamline the traditional Aladdin story into a contest between the boy and a towering vizier-wizard named Jafar, Aladdin's rival for the hand of the Sultan's daughter, Princess Jasmine. What makes this wisecracking cartoon such intense, giddy fun is the eruption of uninhibited parody that Robin Williams provides as the voice of the Genie in Aladdin's lamp. The Genie mutates into dozens of variations on himself as Williams impersonates everyone from William F. Buckley, Jr., to Arsenio Hall. The animators' quick-draw craftsmanship keeps up with Williams' breakaway creativity. With the voices of Scott Weinger, Linda Larkin, Jonathan Freeman, and Gilbert Gottfried (who unexpectedly triumphs as Jafar's tough parrot, Iago); composer Alan Menken contributes five songs, with lyrics by Tim Rice and the late Howard Ashman.—M.S. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/30/92.) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

**The Bodyguard**—According to the screenwriter (and co-producer), Lawrence Kasdan, the script for this picture was written in 1975 as a possible vehicle for Steve McQueen. In lieu of McQueen, Kevin Costner plays the title character, a retired Secret Service man who is hired to protect a famous singer (played by Whitney Houston). Costner sports a fuzzy crewcut that's more travesty than homage, and he's very grim; he looks as if he were still troubled by inconsistencies in the Warren Commission report. Houston flings herself repeatedly at the taciturn hero, begging him for both sex and manly state-of-the-art security. It is, perhaps, a sign of progress that a big-budget commercial picture like this can feature a romance between a white man and a black woman without ever making the racial difference an issue. It would be a more encouraging sign if the movie were any good. Also with Michele Lamar Richards and Gary Kemp. Directed by Mick Jackson.—T.R. (12/14/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

**Bram Stoker's Dracula**—The filmmakers can't put this fiasco off on poor Stoker. What makes the picture so peerlessly ridiculous is the style, not the story. The screenplay, by James V. Hart, embellishes a simple, classic tale with killer-diller thrills and special-effects opportunities; and the director, Francis Ford Coppola, executes every dreadful idea with ferocious, near-fanatical enthusiasm. The movie is conceived as a vampire saga in the modern, eroticized manner—horror to make women swoon like Victorian maidens—but it isn't very scary, and it isn't romantic. Gary Oldman, who plays Dracula, is perfectly opaque and remote in the seduction scenes: he has no sex appeal. The picture just keeps coming at us indefatigably, unstoppably, as if it were pursuing us through eternity, and it leaves us feeling mysteriously drained. This is no ordinary movie: it has the appalling persistence of the undead. Also with Anthony Hopkins, Winona Ryder, Keanu Reeves, Sadie Frost, and Tom Waits.—T.R. (11/30/92) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Bay Cinema, Orpheum VII, Festival, Olympia, and Embassy.)

**Chaplin**—Aside from a few attempts to ape silent-slapstick style, the director of this sprawling bio-pic, Richard Attenborough, and the screenwriters (William Boyd, Bryan Forbes, and William Goldman, working from a story by Diana Hawkins), do their job like crammers. They overstuff nearly two and a half hours of running time with Chaplin's Dickensian London boyhood, his apprenticeship in vaudeville, his growing mastery of movie comedy, his frustrating love life, and the political consequences of his social conscience. Not surprisingly, simplification sets in early. Luckily, Robert Downey, Jr., as Chaplin, displays extraordinary physical and emotive talents. His deftness and agility make the loose recreations of Chaplin's evolving style fun to watch; his suggestion of an unruly interior life is what keeps the movie (barely) alive. And Geraldine Chaplin manages the feat of playing her own mad grandmother, imbuing Hannah Chaplin with a wrenching combination of wounded maternalism and addled propriety. The supporting cast includes Dan Aykroyd (as Mack Sennett), Kevin Kline (as Douglas Fairbanks), Diane Lane (as Paulette Goddard), and Penelope Ann Miller (as Edna Purviance).—M.S. (12/28/92-1/4/93) (19th Street East 6, Gemini, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

**The Crying Game**—This amazing new movie by the Irish writer and director Neil Jordan ("Mona Lisa," "The Miracle") has the sure grip and the unstoppable momentum of a dream. Jordan tells the story of Fergus (Stephen Rea), a troubled I.R.A. gunman who undergoes a thorough emotional metamorphosis, and he makes the hero's change of heart moving and persuasive; the film inspires an irrational sort of trust, a willing suspension of something deeper and more fundamental than disbelief. The script is full of reversals and abrupt dislocations and, halfway through, the movie springs a huge, jaw-dropping surprise. Disorienting us isn't the ultimate aim of Jordan's artistic strategy, though; he jars us out of our accustomed responses to prepare us for the purer, more penetrating ones he really wants from us. The picture is a splendid entertainment—an elating, charmed sprint through all sorts of contemporary terrors. Also with Forest Whitaker, Miranda Richardson, Jim Broadbent, Adrian Dunbar, and a newcomer named Jaye Davidson, who is astonishing.—T.R. (11/16/92) (Angelika Film Center, Sutton, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

**A Few Good Men**—Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson square off in this yuppie version of "The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial," with Cruise as a glib, Harvard-trained Navy lawyer defending two Marines accused of murder, and Nicholson as the Captain Queeg-like officer who set the crime in motion. The writer, Aaron Sorkin (who adapted his own hit play), and the director, Rob Reiner, seem to think the story has something to say about legal and military honor. They take issues that have been chewed over for centuries and finally succeed in reducing them to cud. The whole film, with its steady, important-picture pacing, its four-square visual style, and its pseudo-profundity, is a piece of glorified banality. Nicholson boasts a couple of bravura scenes but Kevin Bacon gives the most persuasive performance, as the no-nonsense prosecutor. With Demi Moore, Kevin Pollak, Kiefer Sutherland, J. T. Walsh, and Wolfgang Bodison.—M.S. (12/14/92) (Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

**Forever Young**—A retro romance in the insufferably gloppy manner of Steven Spielberg's "Always" (which had many of us hoping "Never"). Mel Gibson stars as a daredevil Air Corps pilot in 1939 who volunteers for a cryogenics experiment after his true love (Isabel Glasser) enters a seemingly irreversible coma. By a twist of fate, he stays frozen for over fifty years, emerging with enough of his Dudley Do-Right manliness intact to impress single mom Jamie Lee Curtis, her young son, Elijah Wood, and even her dull suitor, Nicholas Surovy. The screenwriter, Jeffrey Abrams, has a mind that channel-hops from AMC to Nick at Nite: he stuffs the film with old-movie gimmicks and sitcom devices, such as Gibson's being able to propose marriage only when his lover is absent. The director, Steve Miner, matches the writer drip for drip. Gibson isn't smarmy, exactly, but the film makes him appear that way; it's like the joke in "L.A. Story" picturing him as the man of everybody's dreams, male or female. And after Glasser's back-to-back appearances here and in "Pure Country," it's impossible to tell whether she has any talent beyond appearing prettily wholesome. At this point, she's a cornball commodity: a free-range actress. With George Wendt and David Marshall Grant.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, Tower East, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Columbus Circle.)

**The Getaway** (1972)—Another bank heist, and the wholesome, clean-cut robber pair (Steve McQueen and Ali MacGraw) take forever to make it across the Mexican border with their loot. The audience hoots her line readings and applauds when he smacks her around; maybe this audience participation helps to explain the film's success. Sam Peckinpah directed in imitation of Sam Peckinpah; it's a mechanical job, embellished with a vicious, erotic subplot involving Al Lettieri and Sally Struthers. The cast includes Slim Pickens and Ben Johnson. The script, by Walter Hill, is based on Jim Thompson's novel; cinematography by Lucien Ballard; music by Quincy Jones.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 10.)

**Hoffa**—The life of the flamboyant labor leader, who lay down with mobsters and got up with subpoenas, is a terrific subject for a movie—a story of corruption and power, like "Citizen Kane" and the "Godfather" pictures. But what director Danny DeVito and screenwriter David Mamet have done here couldn't have been predicted. They've made a two-hour-and-fifteen-minute movie that doesn't tell the story of Jimmy Hoffa; they're made his life inconsequential. Their Hoffa (Jack Nicholson) is just a blustery movie tough

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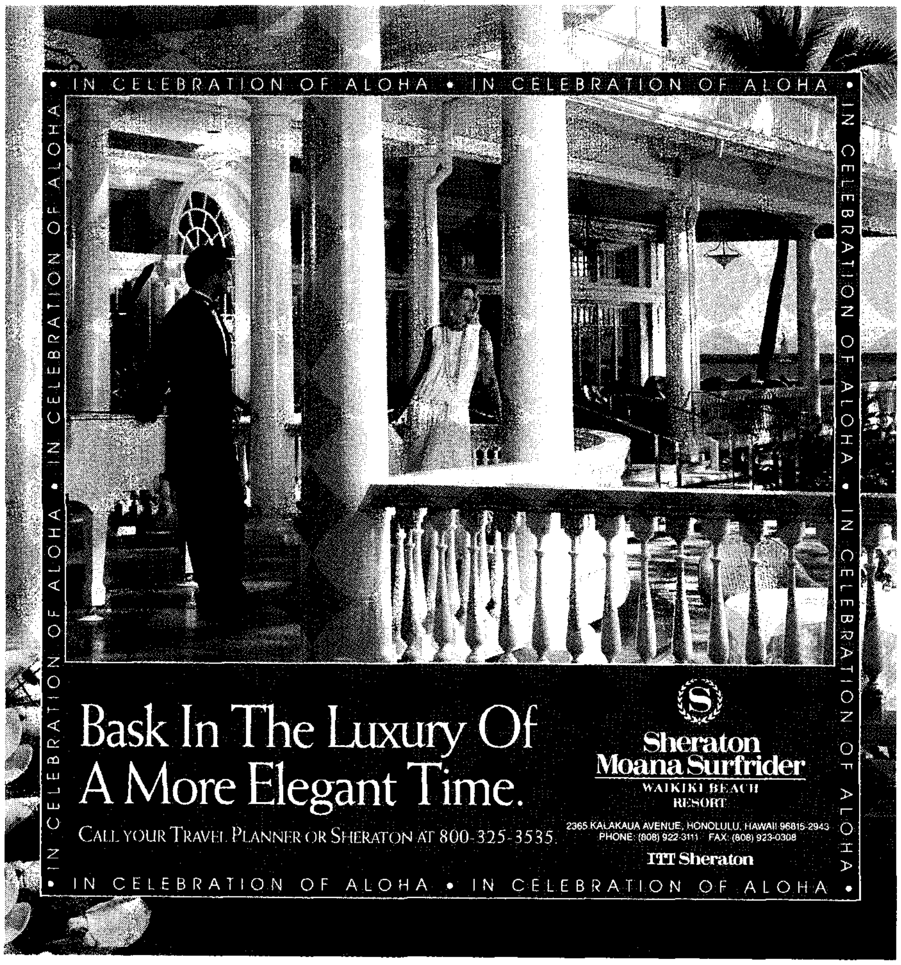

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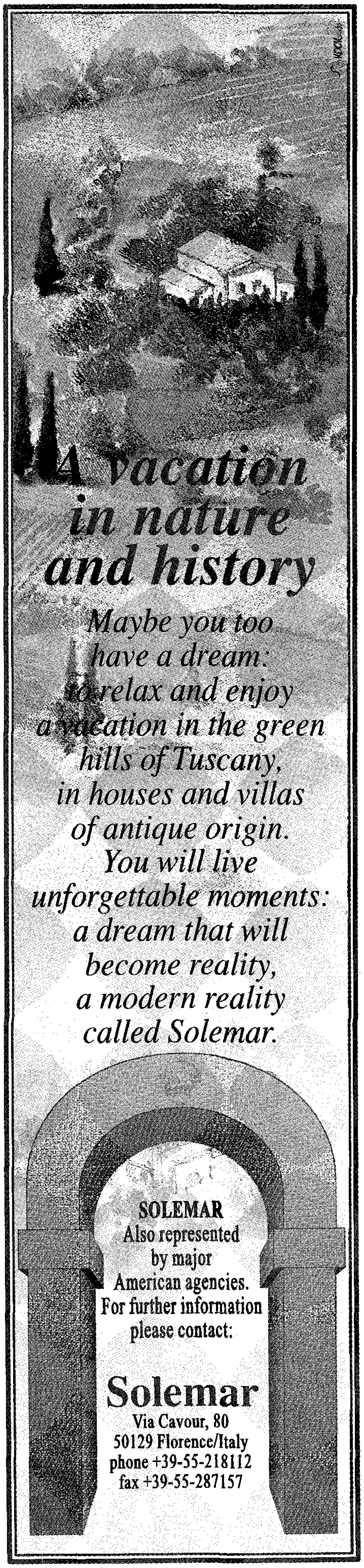

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guy: he gives speeches whose content we aren't encouraged to think about; he pops up in the foreground of labor disputes that haven't been explained to us; he appears before investigative panels whose purposes are unclear, and is interrogated about crimes we've neither seen nor heard about. "Hoffa" tells us less about Hoffa than it does about Mamet's chronic nostalgia for the manly-man ethos of yesteryear—a romantic vision of America, where beefy, two-fisted giants once walked and thugs were thugs, not corporate weasels. Also with Armand Assante, J. T. Walsh, Robert Prosky, and DeVito.—T.R. (12/28/92-1/4/93) (Gotham Cinema, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

**Home Alone 2: Lost in New York**—The director, Chris Columbus, and the producer-writer, John Hughes, use the first "Home Alone" as a template. Leaning hard on the sensitive-brat charm of the eleven-year-old Macaulay Culkin, they duplicate and exaggerate every laugh-getting, tearjerking separation and reunion, every crowd-pleasing gibe and gambit. This time, young Kevin McCallister mistakenly boards a plane to Gotham while his folks fly off to Miami for their Christmas vacation. The filmmakers pump up the volume on the schmalz and sadism, hoping to attain a hyperbolic balance. What they achieve is double overkill. Culkin is directed as if he were an animatronic doll. He screams, he pouts, he proclaims "Yes!" Either you're captivated or you want to muzzle him. The new characters include Brenda Fricker as a homeless woman who devotes herself to pigeons, and Tim Curry, Dana Ivey, and Rob Schneider as nincompoop hotel workers. The repeat performers include Catherine O'Hara and John Heard (as Kevin's parents), and Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern (as Kevin's slapstick nemeses).—M.S. (11/30/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

**Lorenzo's Oil**—With Nick Nolte, Susan Sarandon, and Peter Ustinov; directed by George Miller. (Reviewed in this issue.) (First & 62nd Cinemas.)

**Malcolm X**—There's a great deal of passion in Spike Lee's three-hour-and-twenty-minute adaptation of "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," but it's not an artist's passion. Malcolm, who achieved fame in the early sixties as a compelling spokesman for the black-pride philosophy of the Nation of Islam, is an unlikely hero for a big-studio prestige picture: he begins as a predatory street criminal, becomes a studious Muslim ascetic, and fulfills himself as a scourge. The movie doesn't provide readers of the autobiography anything like a fresh vision of its remarkable subject. The ponderous rhythms of the great-man bio-pic only emphasize the impossibility of rendering this story with conventional movie-narrative means. Denzel Washington's performance as Malcolm gets off to a rocky start—for the first hour, he's required to play the hero as a teen-ager—but it gains authority as the movie goes along. This film's Malcolm isn't so much a character as an image: a statue for us to look up at in wonder. Also with Angela Bassett, Delroy Lindo, Albert Hall, Spike Lee, and Al Freeman, Jr. (a wonderfully sly turn as the hero's mentor, Elijah Muhammad). The script, credited to Lee and Arnold Perl, incorporates (haphazardly) scenes and ideas from a scenario written more than twenty years ago by James Baldwin.—T.R. (11/30/92) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Criterion Center.)

**The Man Who Came to Dinner** (1942)—In the thirties, the unctuous, sentimental Alexander Woollcott was loved by millions of radio listeners; Woollcott the outrageous master of euphonious insults was loved and hated by a small circle. Two members of this circle, George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, made him the hero and the target of their 1939 Broadway hit—a cheerful spoof on celebrity in that period. In this film version, the devastatingly adroit Monty Woolley (a former professor of drama at Yale) plays the arrogant, infantile Sheridan Whiteside, who goes on a lecture tour and breaks his hip while attending a dinner in his honor at the home of boring, worshipful fans. Stuck in that home until his hip mends, he takes it over and orders the residents around. Woolley has a wonderful way of looking at these hick fans with compassionate contempt—he feels sorry for them because they're too obtuse to appreciate how brilliant he is. The play, however, was built on topical jokes and a series of vaudeville turns, and in this version the jokes are flat and the turns seem forced and not very funny. With Bette Davis as Whiteside's secretary, Reginald Gardiner impersonating Noël Coward, Jimmy Durante in the role based on Harpo Marx, Ann Sheridan as the sexpot actress, and Billie Burke, Richard Travis, George Barbier, and Grant Mitchell. Directed by William Keighley; the script, by the Epstein brothers, changed only a few lines.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Jan. 8-10.)

**Once in a Lifetime** (1932)—The young, unknown Moss Hart wrote a satire of Hollywood in the transition from silents to talkies. The Broadway producer Sam Harris accepted it and signed George S. Kaufman, the reigning young playwright, to collaborate. After nine nerve-racking months of revisions, Kaufman and Hart had the "smash" of 1930, and the team lasted for ten historic and incredibly profitable years (what Broadway joined together, psychoanalysis put asunder). They created bustling, congested wisecrack-piled-on-wisecrack comedies; their calculated silliness adds more than enough to each situation and in going beyond your expectations, it can double you up and put you helplessly at the mercy of the next excess. This particular play was considered too rough for Hollywood, but in 1932 Universal brought the enemy within the gates, and, of course, pulled some of its satirical teeth. With moon-faced Jack Oakie as the good-hearted imbecilic vaudevillian who in Hollywood is taken for a genius; Gregory Ratoff as the producer, Herman Glogauer; Aline MacMahon as the skeptical, witty voice coach; Onslow Stevens as the playwright; ZaSu Pitts as the studio receptionist; Louise Fazenda as the critic; and Sidney Fox, Russell Hopton, and Mona Maris. Russell Mack directed, from Seton I. Miller's adaptation. The picture isn't particularly well made, but it's a true period piece—a reminder of the beginnings of a type of Broadway lampoon-comedy, and it has a lovely corny triviality and innocence. (Twenty years later, another famous team, Betty Comden and Adolph Green, took the same period for their "Singin' in the Rain.")—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Jan. 11.)

**The Player**—The title character of Robert Altman's new movie is a young Hollywood studio executive named Griffin Mill (Tim Robbins), who, for no very good reason, murders an aspiring screenwriter. The picture is a brilliant dark comedy about the death of American filmmaking. It's like a documentary about a mirage: the world it shows us is sunlit and shimmering, and the people have the thin presence of holograms. Altman is doing one of his specialties here—exploring an odd American subculture—and when his idiosyncratic realism is applied to the insular, constantly self-regarding community of Hollywood "players" it has an almost hallucinatory effect. The movie has the exhilarating nonchalance of the director's seventies classics, and its tone is volatile, elusive: with breathtaking assurance, it veers from psychological-thriller suspense to goofball comedy to icy satire. Altman turns the self-reflective world of Hollywood into a fun house in which every grotesque distortion somehow appears to us as a newly discovered, paradoxical truth. Robbins gives a layered, richly suggestive performance—the sort of performance that Altman's style, at its best, produces without obvious effort. At sixty-seven, Altman still seems like the youngest filmmaker in America. Also with Greta Scacchi, Peter Gallagher, Fred Ward, Whoopi

"It's from Tony - He's in another love scrape ----"

*Mary Brian, Frank Conroy, Ina Claire, and Henrieta Crosman in "The Royal Family of Broadway"*

PHOTOFEST

Goldberg, Cynthia Stevenson, Vincent D'Onofrio, Lyle Lovett, Dean Stockwell, and Richard E. Grant; dozens of movie stars (and a handful of writers) turn up in cameos. The script, by Michael Tolkin, is adapted from his own novel.—T.R. (4/20/92) (Village East Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

**The Royal Family of Broadway** (1931)—Fredric March in one of his best comedy roles—a flamboyant burlesque of great-lover actor John Barrymore. The gossipy, thinly disguised satire of the Barrymore-Drew clan was a Broadway hit in 1927; Herman J. Mankiewicz and Gertrude Purcell adapted (and improved) the Kaufman-Ferber play, and the young George Cukor (co-directing with Cyril Gardner) had the right theatrical instincts for the material. The film presents actors as childishly vain and narcissistic; as Cukor has said, "It represented what people at that time liked to believe about the theatre." The picture is stagebound and awkward, but good fun anyway. As Ethel Barrymore, the expert, sophisticated stage comedienne Ina Claire doesn't come through fully on screen (she did only once—in "The Greeks Had a Word for Them"), but some of her legendary technique is in evidence. With Henrietta Crosman as the family matriarch, Frank Conroy, Mary Brian, and the stodgy juvenile Charles Starrett.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Jan. 11.)

**Scent of a Woman**—Directed by Martin Brest and screenwriter Bo Goldman labor mightily to design a holiday-season heart-warmer about a middle-aged blind man and a troubled teen-ager (Chris O'Donnell), but fortunately their low intentions are undone by the star, Al Pacino, whose performance taps emotions too complex and too frightening to be resolved by the simple moral victory that ends the picture. His Frank Slade, a retired Army officer and former aide to L.B.J., is a bitter, misanthropic, profoundly depressed man, and the actor makes us feel the full weight of the character's hopelessness. This is acting that chills the heart beyond any possibility of warming. The filmmakers may dismiss the audience with a banal lesson written on the blackboard—"Smell the roses" is the gist—but by the end we're not paying much attention. We're still sorting out the ambiguities and uncomfortable truths that Pacino's great performance has let us in on. He has led us to the heart of darkness, and there's no quick route back. Also with James Rebhorn and Gabrielle Anwar.—T.R. (12/28/92-1/4/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas.)

**This Is the Army** (1943)—The celebrated patriotic stage revue, with music by Irving Berlin, originally performed by enlisted men, was given a story line for the movie, and the cast was padded out with civilian screen actors and other notables. The plot spans two wars and features the curious, near-beer prophetic father-son pairing of George Murphy, as Jerry Jones, a First World War soldier who writes an Army show called "Yip, Yip, Yaphank," and Ronald Reagan, as Johnny Jones, who writes the Second World War show "This Is the Army." Having presented these fictitious authors, when it comes time for Irving Berlin to appear (as Irving Berlin) and sing "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning," the film has the devil's own time explaining who *he* is. It's a huge two-hour musical that reeks of uplift, but there are a few funny lines, an impressive soldier chorus, and many tolerable, if wholesome, numbers. This is not the Army of "From Here to Eternity." Michael Curtiz directed; with Joe Louis, Kate Smith, George Tobias, Joan Leslie, Charles Butterworth, Gertrude Niesen, Frances Langford, Ruth Donnelly, Dolores Costello, Una Merkel, and, from the original cast, the tap-dancer Private James Cross and the singer Sergeant Robert Shanley.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 8 and 10.)

**Trespass**—Walter Hill's rock-the-house urban-siege suspense film, about a nightmarish treasure hunt in a gutted factory, puts viewers in a force field that jangles nerves, heightens senses, and pumps adrenal glands. Bill Paxton and William Sadler play Arkansas firemen who follow a map to a stash of priceless gold church relics in an East St. Louis plant; Art Evans is the black squatter in their path; and Ice T and Ice Cube are the key members of an inner-city crime syndicate. They all collide—catastrophically. Hill doesn't belabor the point that the building and the battlefield it becomes are metaphors for the American city. The director plays that concept for raucous farce and rippling horror; he and his masterly editor, Freeman Davies, set off kinetic blasts in the midst of squalor. This film has the blaspheming explosiveness of contemporary black youth culture—it's visual rap. Robert Zemeckis and Bob Gale wrote the devilishly well-structured script; Ry Cooder contributed a power-surging score.—M.S. (12/28/92-1/4/93) (34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

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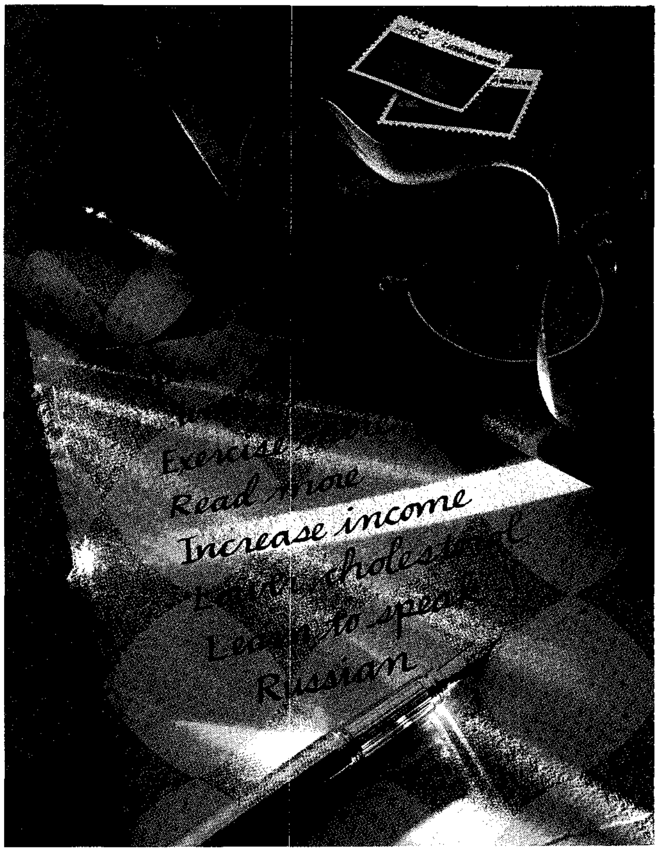

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THE NEW YORKER

# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## ON WITH THE SHOW

THE terminally ill eighty-year-old man sat on the defendants' bench in Moabit Court, in Berlin, and listened to the proceedings. The court was discussing his disease. The public listened, too, and with the attentiveness one grants the climax of a good story, although the discussion proceeded literally in millimetres: How much has the patient's liver malignancy grown in the past month? What has it done to his kidney function? What will it do? When will it reach a size that will cause intense pain? Next week? Or next month? The patient knew his fist-size tumor from inside and out. He could feel it by poking his finger into the lower right-hand side of his abdomen. From inside, he felt no pressure or pain, but he couldn't stand warm food in his mouth. It was as if he didn't want to feed the tumor, which had doubled its volume in two months. The patient had a far-away, resolute expression on his face. He would rather be a defendant than a patient. He did not believe he had done anything wrong, and he looked forward to advancing his case. He felt he had nothing to gain from being ill. However, he was used to his body's being an object of public interest. He found nothing tasteless about having his liver tumor, his cause of death, displayed on the front pages of national newspapers.

BENOÎT VAN INNIS

The patient and defendant, Erich Honecker, was for many years, as General Secretary of the Party and Head of State, arguably the most powerful man in the former East Germany. Many hold him single-handedly responsible for the evils of the German Democratic Republic: its petty kinds of repression, more often found in families than in states, with mutual tattling, policing, confinement, and what amounted to an individualized low-level brutality. The man in the former East German street (who statistically includes the tattler, since it has been calculated that one-sixth of the East German population reported at least on occasion to the Stasi, the security police) would like to see Honecker punished. Finding him guilty and sentencing him would let the so-called "run alongs," or collaborators, off the hook, and it would also gratify the genuinely wronged. The man in the former West German street sees Honecker as somehow responsible for East Germany's economic woes, which today's westerner has to pay for, so he hates Honecker with the particular passion elicited by wasted money. The German government, headed by Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who five years earlier rolled out a red carpet for Honecker, finally, late in 1990, charged the former Head of State with the manslaughter of thirteen people who died trying to escape his republic. Unfortunately for those who would like to punish the accused, and unfortunately for the accused himself, he is terminally ill. Honecker will escape any sentence meted out to him. This illness apparently enrages the prosecution and other impartial members of the court, including the chief judge; they seem to blame the tumor for waylaying justice. It has become clear that the trial cannot be completed within Honecker's lifetime, so in December it had to be decided whether to violate the usual judicial procedure and let him stand trial for as long as possible anyway. In short, the trial had reached a point where the court was forced to deliberate constantly about Honecker's well-being. His health had become as much an object of scrutiny and interest as if he were still holding an important office.

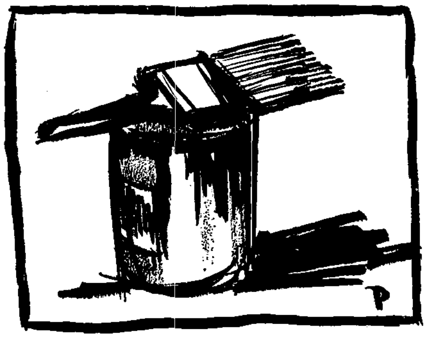
On December 17th, the tenth day of the trial, as the judge was inspecting the latest tomogram of the former Head of State's liver, he apparently felt a qualm—like a slight pressure on his conscience. The picture showed the tumor as an irregular mass shaped rather like an open hand groping inside the lower part of the liver and pushing it sidewise into the right kidney. Liver metastases are extremely common, but primary liver tumors are rare, and this one was growing with such velocity as to surprise the specialists. The judge held the picture of Honecker's ailing liver with sudden care; perhaps he overheard a defense attorney asking Honecker whether he objected to having his medical records bandied about in public. The judge put down the picture and paused to think.

The courtroom where Honecker was being tried for the sins of the G.D.R. was a wood-panelled rectangular stage, its murky atmosphere smeared with mustard-yellow light from two brass-and-plastic chandeliers hanging high up in the recesses of the ceiling. Four defendants sat in a row along the middle of this stage and watched the judge, without much interest. Twice a week, they spent their mornings together in court. The rest of the time they spent apart, in different hospital wards. This had been their routine since the twelfth of November, when the trial began. Initially, five men shared the defendants' bench with Honecker, but in the first weeks two defendants were let off the hook: Willi Stoph, the former Prime Minister, because he was given to sclerotic rages, which it was feared would disrupt the proceedings, and Erich Mielke, the former head of the secret police, because of ill health and because he was already being prosecuted for the murder of two policemen in the nineteen-thirties—a case pending from the Third Reich. But that is another, even more absurd story. This left just three men—Heinz Kessler, a former Defense Minister; Fritz Streletz, a Secretary of the National Defense Council; and Hans Albrecht, another member of the National Defense Council—to answer with Honecker for the border deaths. With their canes and their wandering eyes, they looked like visitors from an old-age home.

Honecker himself still radiates a kind of stern intensity. He is not tall, but his back is straight, a symbol of incorruptibility in Germany. His hands are bony. His face shows illness or nervousness, the skin looking clammy, the cheekbones elevated by sunken cheeks. He wears dark-rimmed spectacles, so large that they mask a third of his face. His mouth is as expressive as a door, swinging open or closed on the hinges of an internal propriety he has followed all his life. His manner is very calm. The spectators of the trial have a bit of trouble grasping him: they see a villain. They should look more closely, but they cannot. They could see there a Young Communist disguised as an elderly grump. They might even see the remains of a hero, the aftermath of heroism.

A roof shingler by profession, a member of the Communist Party by persuasion, Honecker was in the thirties and forties an unbridled opponent of the Third Reich. This put him in very select company. He was one of a group of organized foes of the Nazi regime who either fled in time to plan a comeback from another country or stayed because they had been arrested. Honecker stayed. It is one of the more embarrassing aspects of the present trial that he spent two years in this same prison at Moabit, from 1935 to 1937, before being moved to the Brandenburg prison, where he stayed until 1945. After the war, when he was released from prison, his friends hurried back from their exiles, a group of men almost all in their twenties and mid-thirties, to take over their republic. Visions of a workers' paradise danced in their heads. It must have been a thrilling time of utopian hopes—comparable, perhaps, to the moment when Havel came to power in Czechoslovakia.

Honecker's enthusiasm for the working class and for Communism is still fresh, boyish. On one of the first mornings of his more recent incarceration in the Moabit prison, he heard familiar footsteps in the courtyard, and when he looked out of his cell window he saw his colleague Erich Mielke hobbling along below. Honecker hauled himself up to the window and shouted through the bars, "*Erich! Rotfront!*" ("Keep up the fight!") Neither old age nor years of authority seem to have altered Honecker's ideals. He was never interested in material things. He receives visitors in pajamas. For his eightieth birthday he was allowed one present, and he asked for a box of chocolate-covered brandied cherries called Mon Chéri. The prison guards did not allow him to have it, because of the brandy, so he asked for a book. He is not a complainer. He does not mention pain or discomfort. When he first arrived in court, one of his attorneys took his hand and said, "Oh, that's hot!" And Honecker replied, "I'll be fine."



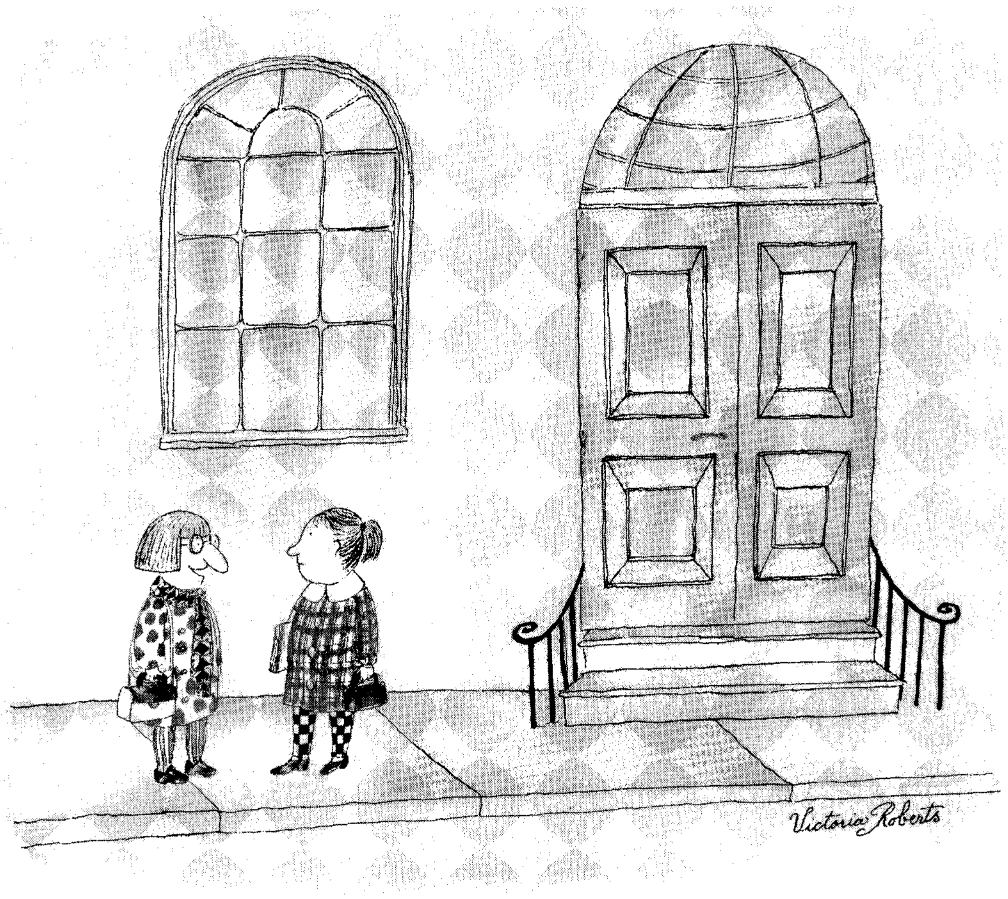
His antagonists on this day were sitting across the room. When Honecker looked up, he saw the prosecutor and, farther along, the mother of a young man shot at the Wall in 1986; the victim's body had been riddled with thirty-one bullets. The mother is a complainant in this case, so she has a lawyer, a fat, mustached man named Hanns-Ekkehard Plöger. Plöger is one of the key figures in the trial. He is much hated; from his first minute among them, the class-conscious in the courtroom, responding fast to his speech and appearance, labelled him an enemy of both the working and the professional classes. Plöger's calling card does not read "Petit Bourgeois," but it might just as well. It says:

Lawyer

Manager of the Berlin Attorneys' Annual Ballroom Dance
President of the Berlin Volleyball Association
Council Member of the German Motorboat Association
Head of the Berlin Chapter of the German Motorboat Association
Board Member of the TUS-Lichterfelde
President of the Union for the Advancement of Young Lawyers and Justice.

On the tenth and possibly the most important day of the trial, Plöger played the leading role. He intended to prove that Honecker was perfectly fit to stand trial. It was rumored that as a student Plöger had twice failed his university exams, but he had studied hard for this: he planned to trip up the medical experts who were arguing that Honecker couldn't live more than a few months. By mid-December, Plöger had read everything he could get his hands on about liver cancer, including the tabloid press's most recent announcement of a miracle cure.

No sooner had the hearing begun than it started grinding to a halt as the judge deliberated whether to grant Honecker the patient privacy or to insist that Honecker the accused face a public hearing. Finally, he announced that the hearing would continue in private, and with that the stage was cleared of most of its characters; even the defendants had to stand up (no mean achievement for men of that age) and leave. They spent the next hours waiting in a small, dank room just below the court. They chatted a little, sitting together, as they had always sat together when they were in office. The seating was adequate, but after a while Honecker, either because he was the most ill or because he had once been the most powerful, took the most comfortable place, lying down on a hospital bed—the only one provided there—and covering himself with a blanket. The question of whether he could stand trial at all was to be decided without him.



*"If I become President, I'm not giving any of my schoolfriends jobs."*

Upstairs, with the public and the defendants out of the way, the members of the court began to leaf through the computer pictures of Honecker's liver. They held them up to the lovely old windows of Moabit Court and tried to make sense of the swirls and stains and shadows. They discussed them as if they really were making sense of them, Plöger's voice as relentless as radio static. Finally, a radiologist could stand no more. "Let me explain them to you," he pleaded. He was facing a problem as old as the Hippocratic oath: laymen who think they know better. The radiologist, a swarthy, portly man, became graceful. He stepped onto a table and held the pictures up to the window. He had to stretch to reach the pane, then pointed out details with the free hand. The members of his audience formed a ragged semicircle below him, gazing at the mysterious picture of Honecker's liver, the light from the window falling on their upturned faces; briefly, the courtroom, with its brownish tones, and the crowd assembled around the radiologist, acquired the strange dignity of a Rembrandt painting.

The medical evidence appeared overwhelming: Honecker's tumor was growing at such a rate that, according to the specialists, it would kill him within three to six months. He should be feeling pain within a few weeks. How could he stand trial? This trial, with two days of hearings a week, could be expected to last between one and a half and two years. "At the moment, he can stand trial," one medical expert said. "The tumor has not yet hit a major vessel or blocked an important tube or eaten into the kidneys. This patient has actually had unbelievable luck."

It was, of course, the worst judgment he could pass: that Honecker had had luck. All afternoon, Plöger made rambling objections and tormented the experts with lay questions. Only Honecker's courtroom physician, Dr. Markus Rothschild, had the nerve—emboldened, perhaps, by the special status a Jewish name confers in Germany—to show his distaste. Plöger wanted to force the specialists to give a precise time of death. "I'm not God," one oncologist said, a bit sadly. Well, then, said Plöger, they should admit that Honecker could very well survive the trial. The experts hemmed and hawed: miracles could not be ruled out. Plöger kept up his attack. He demanded to know the tumor's travel plans. Would it grow downward, into a kidney, or upward, into various ducts? Would it cut off his liver function? Which would come first? The physicians were forced to deliberate. Meanwhile, Dr. Rothschild, whose opinion was not being asked, said, "We are debating whether the patient will die from truncation or decapitation." But this remark did not bother anyone. After a while, Plöger tried a new tack. "How do you know that this is a malignancy at all?" he asked. The assembled physicians were stymied. The radiologist said, "I am certain that it is a malignancy."

"With a hundred per cent certainty, minus one per cent for human error," the oncologist said.

"This is grotesque," Dr. Rothschild said. "I can't stand another minute of it." Nevertheless, he stayed where he was.

"But how do you know?" Plöger repeated. He was toying with the idea of demanding a court order forcing the patient to submit to a painful and dangerous "punctation," whereby a tumor is extracted by needle through the stomach wall and then evaluated.

The judge considered this. Then he said, "I don't think I can find a doctor willing to force a patient to submit to such a procedure." He cast a baleful eye on the defense attorneys. "Now you're going to go out there and tell the press the judge wants to force the patient to have tests done," he said with irritation. The international press had been down on Germany lately.

Finally, Plöger held aloft a tabloid newspaper, his trump card: it contained an article about a new magic drug against cancer. "Have you considered trying this on the patient?" he asked.

The oncologist winced, and said "No."

Plöger exclaimed triumphantly, "And then he will fly to Chile, have himself treated, and live happily ever after!"

With this, the judge was ready to call it a day. "I think we have all seen enough to understand what we can understand of it," he said. He adjourned the court until the following Monday. Then, after another eight-hour discussion of Honecker's terminal cancer, the court ruled that he was indeed well enough to be tried. In a sense, the German Democratic Republic is itself on the stand; one doesn't want to ruin the show by allowing a perfectly sick old man to get off without a fair trial.

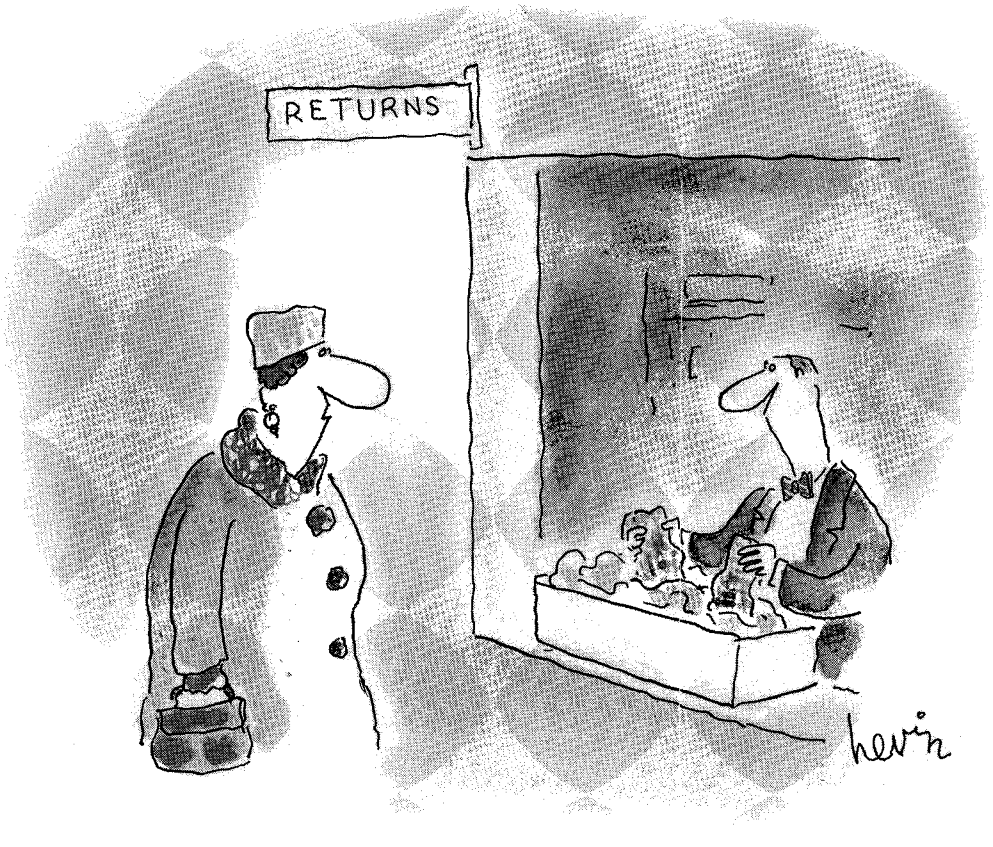
Downstairs, beneath the courtroom, where the holder of the disputed liver was waiting, court wardens had pitched together their small change and bought cake and coffee for the former leaders of the G.D.R. They accepted, and ate and drank, unaware of the debate upstairs. Later, to show their gratitude to the wardens, they autographed napkins for them.

## DISHONORED LADY

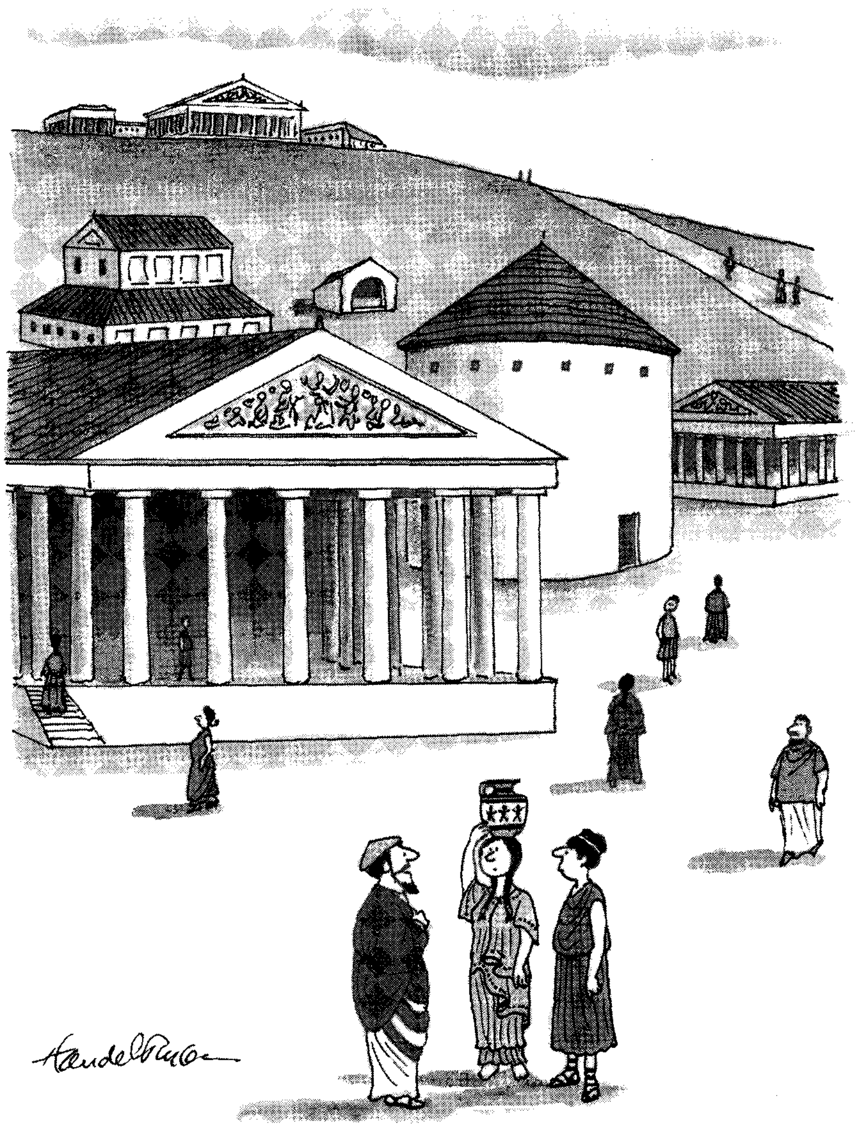
SOMETIMES it seems that Ginger Rogers' career has been haunted by a line in one of the first songs she introduced: "A lucky star's above, but not for me." She sang that in "Girl Crazy," in 1930, at a time when no one would have believed that anything but good luck could possibly befall a girl like Ginger. She went to Hollywood and made her movies—seventy-three of them—and in due course (make that *over*due course) she was called to Washington to receive one of the annual Kennedy Center Honors: the 1992 Honors, which are the fifteenth in the series. The ceremony, which was broadcast to the nation at the end of December, had one big thing wrong with it in regard to Miss Rogers' contribution to the movies. This was the insistence on presenting her primarily as a *dance* star, on the strength of the ten movies she made with Fred Astaire. While it was good to see dancers of the calibre of Jacques D'Amboise and Cynthia Gregory and Edward Villella pay tribute to the woman who'd been George Balanchine's favorite movie star, any fan knows that those dance films represent only one aspect of Ginger. And then the injustice was compounded when Mrs. Robyn Astaire, the dancer's widow, refused to give the Kennedy Center clearance to televise film clips and still photographs of Fred with Ginger. That refusal meant that even the dance portion of Ginger Rogers' career had to be shown incomplete, without the presence of the man who had made it possible.

Old Hollywood hands have long gossiped about a "feud" between Astaire and Rogers, and many have surmised that its real cause was the resentment borne by the Astaire ladies—mother, sister, wife, and now widow—against a female co-star who in their view had always received more than her share of attention. But, surely, after fifty years such hostilities should be put to rest. Until the last minute, CBS held an alternative version of the Kennedy Center clips, just in case Mrs. Robyn Astaire changed her mind. For her not to do so would discredit her husband's memory and sour the spirit of the Kennedy Center Honors, which Astaire himself, standing alongside Balanchine, was among the first to receive.

It should not have taken the Kennedy Center fifteen years to get around to Miss Rogers. Most of her co-stars and colleagues who might have been part of the tribute have died, and she herself is not the symbol of roaring good health that she seemed to be even five years ago.



*"It's fancy-schmantzy. I just wanted fancy."*



*"Agamemnon and Clytemnestra have decided to separate amicably."*

• •

The very idea of omitting Astaire's image from the Kennedy Center presentation set one to thinking about just what it was that made Ginger Rogers a star in her own right and why people hardly seem to remember that she was one. In the days of her greatest fame—roughly, from 1935 to 1945—a star was a combination of qualities, a blend of contradictions. Being one of a kind was not enough: a star had also to be somehow representative—to be a type as well as an individual. Ginger Rogers and Jean Arthur and Barbara Stanwyck had qualities in common that sometimes caused them to be cast interchangeably, yet each was unmistakably herself. They were like three sisters—just as Gary Cooper and James Stewart and Henry Fonda were like three brothers. And the combinations of the combinations inherent in each of these typical individuals were limitless; the possibilities went well beyond those we see captured in the movies that actually got made. The conception of a star personality in the thirties was inclusive; to quote another then popular song, it was all the things you are. In the late forties and in the fifties, the conception tended to exclude variables. You still had to be individually typical, but in only one way. It was as if the various facets of the older stars were now being divided up and doled out one at a time to each new star who came along.

Unlike the versatile men stars, the versatile women stars weren't allowed to keep their star status. They had to compete with younger and simpler versions of themselves (whom the men preferred to play opposite), and they were replaced. Jean Arthur retired from the screen. Barbara Stanwyck's career managed to survive by going low-budget. Meanwhile, Ginger Rogers' many selves were gradually splintering into an extraordinary assortment of actresses. There was June Allyson as the comic and romantic Ginger, Doris Day as the musical Ginger, Joan Leslie (who even danced with Astaire) as the girlish Ginger, Celeste Holm as the bon-ton Ginger, Barbara Bel Geddes as the Theatre Guild Ginger. There was even a European, art-house Ginger—Hildegard Neff. And when Jane Fonda first appeared in films, as a comedienne, she was—well, who but the New Wave Ginger? (Rogers herself had once been compared to *Henry* Fonda, by the critic James Agee.) Another total Ginger has never come along and never will. For that reason, a fan would have done well to spend part of the holidays watching her on AMC in one of the better Christmas movies, "Bachelor Mother." And then the fan would have poured some champagne, got out a cassette of "Shall We Dance" and watched the wonderful ending, in which Fred searches for his Ginger, and Ginger is all the women in the world.

## NO SPEECHES, PLEASE

Of all the noises that New Yorkers have to endure—the honking of horns, the roar of pneumatic drills, the crackle of gunfire, the yapping and howling of ambulances—one little sound may have come to be more widely dreaded than any other: the gentle *ping-ping* of a spoon on the side of a glass. The sound itself is inoffensive, even rather charming; the dread is of what follows. With the easing of the recession, the holiday period brought a proliferation of dinners, parties, and reunions, and, with it, a dramatic escalation of the *ping-ping* effect. Things should look up a bit now, but *ping-ping* will continue to be a year-round phenomenon. Therefore, even at this late stage, we would humbly propose to those with an addiction to speechmaking that they consider including a period of abstinence among their resolutions for the New Year. ♦

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IN FASHION

# MUSCLEBOUND

*The era of the gym as theatre is upon us, and people's exercise clothes—even their bodies—have become costumes.*

*by Holly Brubach*

BRIAN MOSS, the brains behind Better Bodies, in Chelsea, conceived of his gym as a club—not a health club, like the New York Health & Racquet Club, with a pool and tennis courts, but a night club, like, say, the Limelight or Nell's, with low lighting and funky décor. At thirty-five, Moss looks pretty much the way he did when he appeared five years ago on the cover of *Playgirl*—tall, with long dark hair in a ponytail, four silver rings in his right ear and one in his nose, and a few days' stubble; on an average winter weekday at his office, he is wearing a black sweatshirt cut out at the neck, several silver charms on leather thongs around his neck, torn jeans, and motorcycle boots. The entrance to the gym is through a café, with marble-top tables and wrought-iron chairs, an Ionic column, and empty gilt picture frames on the walls. There are vitamin supplements for sale at the counter, including one called Fat Burning Complex; also, water bottles, carrot juice, bagels, T-shirts, and magazines with names like *Ironmen* and *Flex*. The stairwell leading to the gym, in the basement, is strewn with graffiti, "like the subway," Moss explains.

Downstairs, the walls, ceiling, and floor are black, and the equipment, all raw metal with a clear finish, is arranged according to body parts: arms, legs, back. The swirl-patterned rug in the cardiovascular-training area, cordoned off by velvet ropes, was acquired from the Tropicana Casino, in Atlantic City. At the center of the room, under a crystal chandelier, are a yellow tufted sofa and chairs, slipcovered in plastic to deflect sweat. A man in gym shorts and a tank top is sitting on the sofa, taking a snooze, his head lolling on his shoulder. As for the murkiness, interrupted at intervals by overhead spotlights that cast dramatic shadows and make muscles stand out in stark relief, Moss thinks of it as an essential part of the atmosphere. "I'm sure there are some people who love 7-Eleven lighting in a gym, but I'm not one of them," he says.

STEVE BRODNER

The men are wearing a variety of getups. A plaid flannel shirt with the sleeves ripped off at the armholes, loose-fitting jeans, a Walkman, and construction boots. A sleeveless-cut off T-shirt, a wide leather weight belt, black tights, black-and-fluorescent-green half-gloves, and construction boots. A red "Gold's Gym" tank top, biker shorts, a Walkman, a clunky stainless-steel watch, a weight belt, and construction boots. One guy with his key ring threaded on his bootlace walks by, jingling with every other step. "I've always worn boots in the gym," Moss says, not only for support in heavy squats but also because he likes the "punkiness" of the way boots look. "Within the last year or so, they've been adopted by the gay community," he says. "These guys all come in here with heavy footwear. Sneakers are totally out."

Most of the people who work out at Moss's gym look as if they've been busy with their scissors—lopping the legs off their sweatpants and cutting short their tank tops, sawing off the sleeves of their shirts, hacking their necklines wider and deeper. There is, he says, a progression that people who come to get into shape inevitably go through: "When they first start, they're not willing to expose anything. And then, as they begin to change, they want validation, to show you they're changing—guys will go sleeveless, girls will start to wear little skimpy things. Some people might stay at that point. But if they really go to the extreme and build a lot of muscle, they cover up. They just become secure with it. They know they have a great body, and they don't have to show it. I think how people dress is a function of where they are in the quest for their bodies." In Moss's opinion, the baggy look that prevails at his gym these days is "a backlash" against spandex and cotton Lycra.

Moss opened Better Bodies in 1982, and two years later he founded the first modelling agency for bodybuilders. Since then, the fitness business has changed considerably, and, Moss believes, so have the bodies of the people who work out. If bodybuilding has failed to find the broad audience that he and others envisioned, it has perhaps nudged the mainstream in the direction of a bit more muscle. As for the guys who start working out and announce that they don't want to get too big, Moss thinks that that's an inferiority complex talking—that they're rationalizing their bodies' limitations. "If tomorrow they could have twenty-inch arms," he says, "they'd buy a new wardrobe."

These days, Moss surveys his clients—men and women alike—with a satisfied air. "In the beginning, I don't remember ever walking into my gym and thinking how great everybody looked," he says. "But now everybody has a little muscle happening somewhere." He thinks that it has now become not only acceptable but even sexy for women to have muscles. Look at Madonna, whose videos have documented the conversion of her baby fat into sinew, or at the Coors Light beer commercial that shows a girl flexing her biceps on the beach. Linda Hamilton, Arnold Schwarzenegger's co-star in "Terminator 2," was the best advertisement Moss could ever have hoped for, he says. These are bodies that have come about by means of a combination of aerobic activity (for reducing fat) and weight training (for shaping the muscle), an approach that the sneaker manufacturers have seized upon and promoted as "cross-training."

Moss says that he wanted to create a place where men and women could train side by side and inspire one another, but on this winter day the women are definitely outnumbered. There is a blond model in black toreador tights and a midriff top. A redhead who, according to Moss, has posed for *Playboy* and appeared in lingerie ads walks by carrying a pair of free weights; she is wearing black tights that accentuate her minuscule waist, and a red-and-white-striped T-shirt, cut away at the shoulders to expose her deltoids. "And I don't think those muscular arms make her large breasts any less attractive," Moss says appreciatively.

AT Jean-Paul Gaultier's men's show for the current winter season, presented in Paris last year, the models strode the runway in clothes that showed off their carefully cultivated physiques. There were vests worn open over bare chests, leggings that clung to the calves and thighs. There was also a jersey photo-printed on the front with a picture of a muscular male torso—for the scrawny-chested who wish they were otherwise or maybe for the man who resents having to hide his Herculean assets underneath a shirt. Gaultier expresses a certain homoeroticism with such wit and humor, and such candid enthusiasm, that you can't help being fascinated and amused by it, even if you don't share his predilection for men hewn out of rock. Toward the end of the show, a model came out wearing a leather bustier cut just below his pectorals, bulging like breasts, with the nipples exposed, and the audience—a conglomeration of journalists, buyers, and Gaultier groupies—burst into a chorus of whistles and catcalls.

"It is tempting to believe that people always feel physically the same and that they look different only because the cut of their garments changes—to subscribe to the notion of a universal, unadorned mankind that is universally naturally behaved when naked," Anne Hollander writes in "Seeing Through Clothes." "But art proves that nakedness is not universally experienced and perceived any more than clothes are." Surveying paintings made over the past seven centuries, she concludes that "all nudes in art since modern fashion began are wearing the ghosts of absent clothes—

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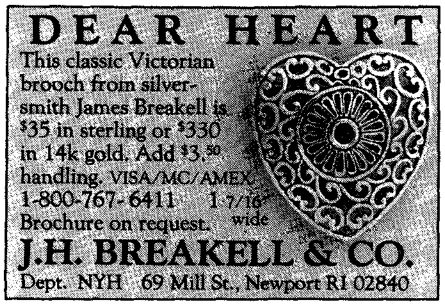

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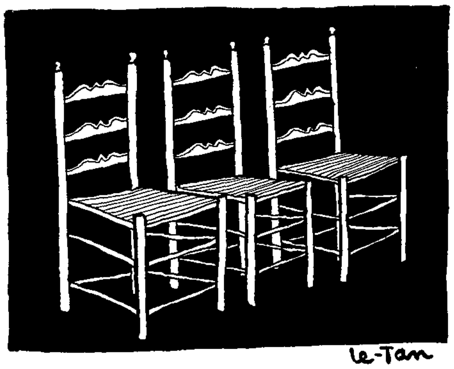
sometimes highly visible ghosts." What's harder to discern is whether naked bodies are seen through the lens of the clothes they have shed, or whether the clothes came about in response to the need to see the naked body in a certain way, to depict it in a manner that is particularly timely—calling attention to some features, minimizing others.

For centuries now, the way we choose to style the naked body and the way we move have been inextricably tied to the clothes we wear, but it is only relatively recently, with the advent of exercise as a cosmetic science, that people have had the option of actually becoming the body as they choose to see it, transforming themselves into some facsimile of their own ideal. The prototypical body, male or female, toward which people have strived in art and in life turns out to be not fixed and classical but, like the clothes we wear, subject to the whims of the moment. Kenneth Clark, in "The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form," has documented some of these vicissitudes: the "flat, rectangular chest" of the antique male nude; the late-Gothic swell of the woman's belly; the quattrocento's fascination with the planes of the man's shoulders; the slender mannerist elongation of both the man's and woman's arms and legs. Those of us who spend a disproportionate amount of time looking at models, in pictures and on runways, have witnessed the most recent shift firsthand: for women, toward a shapelier figure, with fuller breasts and a little more meat on the bones; for men, toward a more pumped-up physique, with an often exaggerated emphasis on the shoulders and arms and chest. In both cases, the general trend has been toward more muscle. As it happens, the vernacular of movement has changed, too—you see it in people's body language, in the way they dance, which is now more calisthenic and aggressive.

Marc Cavigioli, a swashbuckling, squarely built twenty-seven-year-old power lifter who works as a personal trainer in Worcester, Massachusetts, says that "there's a real masculine pride in being strong, and now some women are taking a lot of pride in it, too, which I think is great." He talks about the "elemental, barbaric pleasure in dominating people physically," and says, "The nice thing about weight training is that you can get that feeling without ever touching anybody else. And, to be honest, you can consider yourself part of the warrior class without ever putting yourself in danger."

Cavigioli met his wife, Rebecca, a power lifter and a bodybuilder, at their local branch of the Bay State Gym, where, by his account, a lot of guys were intimidated by her because she could outlift them. He finds muscles on women sexy—particularly, muscular legs and a muscular midsection. But mostly, he says, he's attracted to the image of a woman who doesn't look helpless.

A random survey of a handful of men, none of whom exercise with weights, and who rated their own physical conditions as ranging from fit to decrepit, turned up slightly different reactions to the notion of women's new muscle. One, an executive in his mid-forties, confessed that "hard body tissue of any kind" left him sexually indifferent, and that being with a woman with fabulous deltoids would only make him feel more self-conscious about the disintegration of his own. Another man, who has lived abroad, called this new development "a sign of further confusion as to what the feminine state is," and said that he found it part of a larger issue, about the loss of femininity in America—in other societies, where women are treasured for being women, this sort of obsession doesn't exist, he says, and in those societies women are much happier. A third man, an avid tennis player, hypothesized that muscular men's preference for women with muscles is predicated on narcissism, and he grappled with the apparent contradiction between his own misgivings about muscle on women and his feminist conviction that it's good for women to be capable and strong. Female athletes, he concluded, are attractive because they've developed their muscle in the service of some activity, rather than as an end in itself. All the respondents said that they wouldn't want to be with a woman who had more muscle than they do.



For all his love of women's muscles, Cavigioli says that there's not much danger of his being physically outclassed by a woman—that it's highly improbable he'd find a woman stronger than he is. "By the same token," he adds, "I think many women wouldn't want to be with a guy who's smaller and weaker than they are. I guess it's a deeply rooted cultural thing."

At eight-thirty on a Saturday morning on the Upper West Side, you see them—women dressed in tights and running shoes and maybe an insulated parka over their Jogbras and T-shirts, their hair pulled back in ponytails, with bright-colored stretch-terry sweatbands around their foreheads. They carry no handbags; they walk at a brisk pace, intent on a goal, never deviating from their beeline path for a glance at the shopwindows they pass, never pausing to read the morning's headlines displayed on the newsstands along the way. They are going to the Advanced Step class at Jeff Martin Fitness Studios, at Seventy-sixth and Broadway.

Morning, noon, and night, the music throbs, spilling out of the third-floor windows and into the street when the weather is warm. Pedestrians on their way home from buying groceries at Fairway look up and see rows of bouncing figures. During the multi-impact aerobics classes, the sidewalk seems to vibrate, the way it does when a subway train passes underfoot.

Jeff Martin's clients—the overwhelming majority of them diehard and female—know the rules: they call to reserve a place (each place designated by a number painted on the floor), so that there's no last-minute scramble, no unsportsmanlike scuffles over the chance to stand front and center, next to the teacher. They know the routines so well that they could do them in their sleep. They know the teachers and follow their favorites around town, to the other aerobics studios where they teach.

Martin is a former actor, who says that the decisive moment in his career came when, at age twenty, he landed a part in an Andy Warhol play called "Sky High," and abruptly lost it because he was too embarrassed about his body to take off his shirt. That experience prompted him to get in shape: he joined the Y.M.C.A. on Twenty-third Street and embarked on a program of swimming and running on the track. Downstairs, there were aerobics classes in progress. Martin watched them and thought, I could make this so much more fun. There were no aerobics studios in New York at the time, he recalls. In 1982, he opened his own studio in the loft where he was living and put an ad in the paper, announcing a class in "dance exercise." The first day, four women came; the second day, he had five. They dressed for the occasion like the heroine of "Flashdance," which had just come out. It was five years before he had a full class of forty.

When, four years later, the hair salon upstairs closed down, he took over the space and expanded. Although Martin seems to have a devoted clientele, he regards his position in the Manhattan fitness market as embattled, now that many aerobics studios are losing their constituents to gyms with cross-training facilities. To keep up with the competition, he has added a circuit-training room upstairs, outfitted with a stationary bike, a stair machine, a rowing machine, and other equipment. But it is primarily the introduction of step aerobics that has given his business the boost it needed to stay alive. The plastic platforms are stacked at the back of the studio. "At first, you just step up and step down," Martin says. "Then we add combinations—fun little patterns that keep people happy."

Now thirty-four, balding, compact, and not particularly lean, he cuts an affable, if not especially inspirational, figure. One Saturday afternoon, an hour before the Power Jam class he teaches, he is wearing sweatpants, a brown polo shirt over a white T-shirt, and sneakers. Along a wall in the waiting area, the instructors are represented by black-and-white eight-by-ten head shots. The studio is lit with red fluorescent lights—an idea he came up with ten years ago for a Halloween party and kept, because, he says, it makes the classes "more like a performance." The cast for the class in progress—advanced multi-impact aerobics, led by a guest instructor—is costumed at the start in white socks and sneakers, biker shorts, and zippered warmup jackets and sweatshirts that say "Vanderbilt University" or "Fordham Law." The routine begins with calis-

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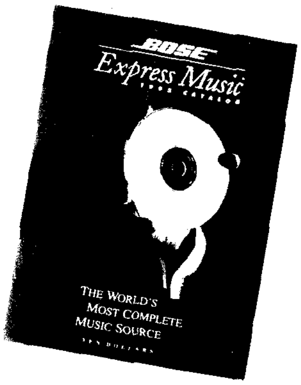

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thenics and some stretches. As the pace quickens and hair gets damp with sweat, the women peel off their top layers to reveal Lycra spandex racer-back leotards cut high in the rear like thong bikinis, or Jogbras and thong briefs over biker shorts, with a belt at the waist. The teacher, all in white, is rock solid, with big quads; she shouts to make herself heard over Dionne Warwick singing "Do You Know the Way to San José?" The overweight women wear black tights and big T-shirts long enough to cover their thighs. Two lone men wearing biker shorts and Ts go through the moves without a hitch. Twenty minutes into the hour, the energy in the room is surging. A Japanese woman, whose pink sweatshirt and matching sweatpants are in flagrant violation of the unspoken dress code here, gets lost early on; she stands, panicked, flapping her arms helplessly, her eyes on the instructor for some clue to what comes next. Hands on the floor, butts in the air: stretches for the hamstring and the Achilles tendon, alternating legs. When the routine ends, the students file out slowly, stoned on endorphins, savoring the sense that every cell in their bodies is awake. An emaciated woman in the back corner stays behind for the next class, her third in a row.

BILL PEARL, a former bodybuilder whose garage, in Phoenix, Oregon, houses a collection of exercise equipment that dates as far back as the 1893 World Exhibition, in Chicago, says, "The fitness industry is constantly going through cycles." Someone who thirty years ago might have spent three days a week on the ski slopes now puts in three sessions a week training anaerobically at the gym, and skis only once or twice. "Cross-training is a cycle that people will go through," Pearl says, "just like they went through jogging and running, and now they're back into walking again." Among Pearl's most prized acquisitions is a motorized contraption, manufactured by a company called Battle Creek, that took the country by storm in 1936 and '37, with a vibrating belt that would shake different parts of the body—the idea being that fat could be jiggled away.

Of all the equipment we use to work out, weights have probably changed the most, Pearl says. At the turn of the century, there were Global barbells and dumbbells, first produced by a professor picturesquely named Louis Attila, who opened the first health club in the United States, in 1894. On either end of a bar was a globe with a plug in it; to change the weight, the plug was unscrewed and the globe was filled with sand or shot or water. It was in the mid-thirties that the barbells and dumbbells we know today came into use, and in the seventies that adjustable weights, stacked on a cam, were conceived.

In the early seventies, an inventor by the name of Arthur Jones broke up the old Universal multi-station—a standard fixture in high-school gymnasiums—into separate units, with a different apparatus for each, and called his system Nautilus. This was an improvement, Pearl contends, primarily because it made for better traffic flow at the gym. The newfangled, collapsible rowing machines that fit under the bed are no better than the bulky 1924 cast-iron-and-hardwood model that Pearl has—if anything, he says, he prefers the old one, because it's sturdier. Recumbent bicycles, the latest fad in many health clubs, existed as early as 1902, according to Pearl.

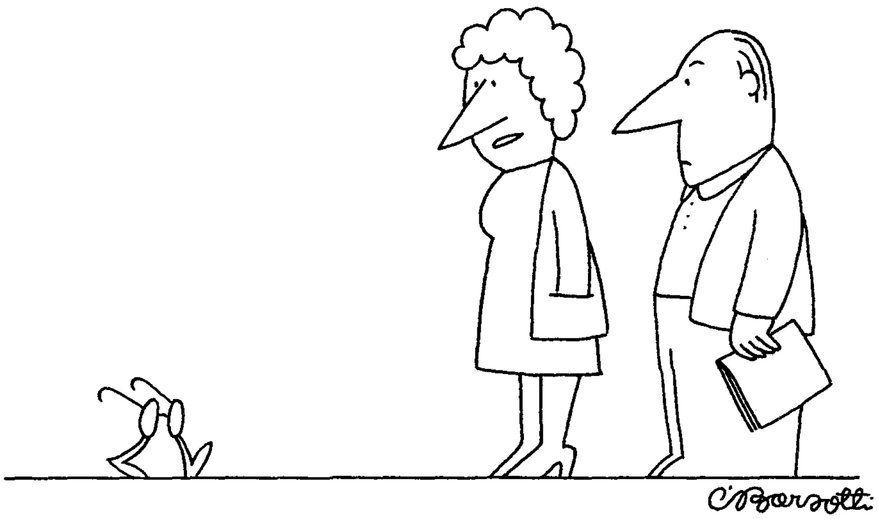
"Wellness" is going to be the next buzzword, he predicts. The high-tech chrome equipment that dominated health clubs ten years ago is now passé; Pearl calls it the Danish-modern furniture of the fitness business. The new trend, he says, is white enamel, which looks more "medical." The latest installment in this gradual transformation of the health club into the fitness clinic is a line of equipment called Lifecircuit, presided over by a computer that acts as a robotic one-on-one trainer: prescribing the amount of resistance and the number of repetitions for each exercise, setting the range of motion, correcting your pace if you're working too fast or too slow, grading your performance, telling you what you did wrong if you scored, say, eighty-five out of a hundred, and, finally, congratulating you if you've done everything right. "If you were to compare one of these machines to an old arm-curl machine from the nineteen-twenties, the basic concept hasn't changed a great deal, but the sophistication has," Pearl says. "I attribute that to the fact that there's not a lot more that you can come up with to do—that the human body hasn't changed all that much over the last thirty-five thousand years."

IN their remarkably tuneless hit song, "I'm Too Sexy," Right Said Fred—guitarist Rob Manzoli and Fred and Richard Fairbrass, two brothers who own a gym in London—list some of the problems a person with a body perfected by exercise might come up against: *I'm too sexy for my car, too sexy for my car, too sexy by far.* In the song's homemade-looking video, footage of fashion shows is interspersed with scenes of the Fairbrass brothers—both completely bald and so well built that their chests look as if they were encased in armor—performing on a runway lined with groupies. *I'm too sexy for Milan, too sexy for Milan, New York, and Japan.* As the two of them walk down the street, a passerby rips off Fred's tank top. (*I'm too sexy for my shirt.*) The moral: if you want a body that drives perfect strangers wild with desire, you'd better be prepared to trade in your car, your wardrobe, your cat (your cat?), your boyfriend or girlfriend—*I'm too sexy for my love, too sexy for my love, love's going to leave me.* Wait a minute. You mean that somebody who's such a flawless physical specimen could actually get left?

DOWNTOWN, at the Plus One Fitness Clinic, in the World Financial Center, the rush starts around seven-thirty in the morning, when corporate-looking men and women stop in before office hours. In changing rooms that are private bathrooms, each equipped with a shower and a phone, the clients shed their suits and put on gray sweat shorts and T-shirts provided by the management, or sweat shorts and T-shirts of their own. The uniformity gives Plus One the vague air of a Phys. Ed. class. There is no spandex here; the clothes people wear to exercise are almost without exception cotton, neutral-colored, and slightly baggy. The atmosphere is amiable but businesslike, with no bodies on display. Conversation takes place only among people who are evidently already acquainted—colleagues who greet each other in passing and inquire about plans for the weekend or make some remark about how yesterday's meeting went.

In the gym, decorated like a post-modern, Memphis-style ocean liner, in shades of pale yellow, apple green, and battleship gray, the tall windows and twenty-foot ceiling make for lots of light and air. The floor is covered in that rubbery, disk-patterned vinyl that now paves so many airport terminals. The equipment is arranged in long rows—free weights and benches, Cybex machines (with slabs of weights hoisted up and down by pulleys), stationary bikes, Lifesteps, Upper Body Ergometers (like bikes you pedal with your arms), treadmills, and a NordicTrack cross-country ski machine—interspersed with long upholstered tables, a blood-pressure monitor, and mysterious apparatuses that look like cockpit seats, with knobs and gauges, Velcro straps, and computer screens that every so often emit a low-pitched beep. Plus One is a full-service operation, featuring not only trainers but doctors, massage therapists, and physical therapists for rehabilitation. A few clients come on crutches, a few others in wheelchairs. Mike Motta, the founder of the Plus One empire (with branches on Crosby Street, in SoHo, and in the Waldorf-Astoria), brings to the fitness business advanced degrees in exercise science and applied physiology, and experience coaching college football and lacrosse, and his gym combines the latest research in sports medicine with the rigors of athletic conditioning. Most of the men look like part-time jocks, who maybe played a sport in high school or in college. The women seem out to offset a desk job's long-term effects on their hips.

Motta says that one of the biggest changes he's seen in the ten years since he opened Plus One is in people's attitudes. "They're realizing that exercise doesn't have to be an intense period of torture to be effective," he says. That, he continues, was the eventual downfall of the Nautilus system, which sold not only machines but an entire philosophy of training. "You bounced in and you crawled out" is how he summarizes it: no pain, no gain. Now that studies have proved that burning out the muscle doesn't necessarily serve everybody's purposes, the emphasis has shifted, to day-to-day consistency rather than high intensity. Every year, there's a new crop of aerobic gizmos introduced: underwater treadmills, tub-sized swimming pools (for laps in place), downhill ski machines with a map of the slope on a video monitor, and other toys designed to keep people from getting bored. "Training is becoming a whole way of life," Motta says. "People smoke so much less, they drink so much less, they party so much less—they've got to do something with their time."



*"Well, I'll be darned. They had just walked away."*

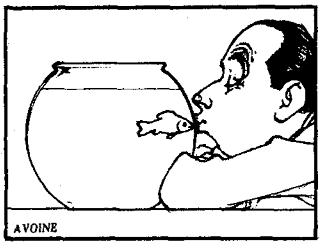
ON a Saturday afternoon in the dead of winter, at the Vertical Club, just a few blocks north of Bloomingdale's, everybody looks tanned in the light of the red neon lining the running track, which is suspended, like a balcony, overhead. A phalanx of stationary bikers—two rows, a dozen each—is pedalling furiously, going nowhere. All the stair machines are occupied, too. Some people read the *Times* or *New York* or *USA Today* as they climb; others stare at video monitors tuned to MTV or gaze at the mirrors opposite, checking out their fellow-strangers without being too obvious. There is no one on the treadwall, a revolving cliff face that works like a garage door with boulders on it—this is one fitness fad that has so far failed to happen. Upstairs, on the track, a runner is jogging backward.

Several of the men wear frayed cutoffs over biker shorts—a look that one connoisseur of the Manhattan gym scene calls "very hetero." A trainer named Kyle contends that "true jocks only wear cotton." Asked how many true jocks there are in attendance that day, he replies, "About five." Mostly, the women wear bright-colored spandex thong leotards over biker shorts, and jewelry; the men wear designer sweatsuits or Nike tank tops and gym shorts, and jewelry. A longtime regular claims that there is a direct correlation between the shape the women are in and the size of the rocks on their fingers: the prettier the face, the better the body, the bigger the diamond. In the serried lines of stair climbers, there is a thirtyish blonde with uniform features, in a hot-pink spandex midriff top and black biker shorts, who is sporting diamond ear studs, a big gold Rolex, and a diamond ring that looks to be somewhere in the neighborhood of eight carats. Her neighbor to the right, a slightly frumpy brunette in a navy Lycra leotard with bright-green racing stripes and matching tights, is wearing a stainless-steel-and-gold Rolex and, on her left hand, a Cartier rolling ring. There is more makeup and perfume and hairspray here than at most gyms. The women's hair is not so much pulled back as piled up. Even the men look coiffed. What ever happened to sweatbands? "No more sweatbands," the longtime regular says. "Sweatbands are over."

A few of the women wear belts with fancy buckles to dress up their leotards. There are off-the-shoulder leotards, leotards sprinkled with rhinestones, leotards inset with panels of stretch lace. "I've seen stuff here that looks like it came from Victoria's Secret," Kyle says.

The muscles on view are fewer and

smaller than the ones at Better Bodies. There is more conversation. Two women sit side by side on recumbent bicycles and discuss the tuition at Dalton. In the aerobic area, mauve carpet gives way to a hardwood floor. A t'ai chi class, led by an instructor with a low, soothing voice, is in progress. The students look like refugees from the glitter all around them—the women in plain, full-cut leotards and the men in fleece sweatpants. A guy in good shape, wearing tricolor spandex tights sewn in diagonal panels, pauses, and sizes up the goings on. "Exercise for ex-hippies," he snorts, and proceeds to the rowing machines.



In the ladies' locker room, a young woman peels off her halter-neck spandex unitard and changes into a white shirt, jeans, and crocodile cowboy boots. This is a good place to work out if you're single and looking for a man, she claims; she met her last boyfriend, a real-estate agent, on the treadmill. She likes meeting men at the gym, she says, because, to be perfectly honest, you can see what it is you're getting, without the benevolent camouflage of street clothes. Another woman, overhearing this, speaks up. "If you ask me, that's a problem," she says, and explains that when you meet a man at a gym, you can disqualify him at a glance on the basis of his body, whereas under other circumstances you might take an interest in his mind first, or fall under the spell of his humor, and then, she concludes, his flabby arms and the roll of fat around his middle, when you got around to discovering them, wouldn't strike you as so noteworthy and off-putting.

It seems odd now that as recently as fifteen years ago regular exercise was something most women did in private, at home alone, in front of their televisions, or in a group, led by a dancer who needed a steady job to pay the rent. Going to an exercise class was like going to the hairdresser—not a secret, exactly, but part of the discreet maintenance that being a woman entailed. You went off to an exercise studio and whittled away at your waist or firmed up your inner thighs, just as you went to the beauty salon and had your hair colored or your nails done. Gyms were nuts-and-bolts, sweaty, fetid places for men who played sports and lifted weights. Exercise studios were more aesthetic, with blond wood and mirrors and spider plants hanging from the ceiling. The exercises that men did were strenuous, meant to build muscle and make them strong. The paces women were put through mostly consisted of stretching, toning, and spot reducing, to make them more supple and give them better figures.

What women wore for these occasions—leotards, usually, and footless tights—made them look more like dancers than athletes. The standard models were by Danskin, in a thick nylon knit with a spongy texture; in a limited range of styles (scoop neck, turtleneck, V neck); and in basic colors like black, navy, red, pastel pink and blue. The alternative to Danskin was Capezio, which offered more necklines to choose from and, eventually, a high-cut leg, as well as lighter-weight materials and a broader range of colors. Regardless, the only options were solids—no stripes or prints—and the knits, all matte, were a hundred-percent synthetic, without a trace of cotton.

Since then, the field has been revolutionized by advances in fabric technology, particularly in stretch fibres—most recently, a fabric called Supplex, which feels like cotton and dries like a synthetic. The branch of the fashion business that these days goes by names like "bodywear" or "activewear" now encompasses not only second-skin knits but also all manner of athletic clothing. Among the trends that industry reports forecast for the near future are: Biokryl, a nylon-and-cotton blend treated with a fungicide to prevent bacteria growth; HoloTex, a holographic fabric for higher visibility; Mitrolite, a fabric that changes color as the person wearing it moves; unitards, leggings, and "bikeatards" (unitards that end at mid-thigh), with tone-on-tone embroidery or patent-leather accents; denim-look sports bras. Unfortunately, a lot of the clothes that come under this category, particularly the ones designed expressly for aerobics, are awful-looking, in gaudy, unbecoming colors, and in prints that qualify as a blight on the landscape. These recent outbursts of reckless bad taste, as if inside an aerobics studio all the rules were temporarily suspended, bring to mind the corollary question—a mystery of long standing—about why people dress the way they do on the golf course, in clothes they wouldn't be caught dead in on the street.

Sports clothes have evidently become synonymous with sportswear in a lot of people's minds. Elderly men and women who never go running dress in jogging suits to travel on a plane. Kids wear sneakers, no matter what the occasion. Suburban mothers shopping at the supermarket are turned out in leggings and T-shirts. In fact, it seems that Americans, who first put casual clothes on the fashion map, have lately gotten even more casual, wearing some form of exercise clothing whenever they're not required to be "dressed up," which by all appearances is more and more often. Probably this has to do with the fact that relaxation equals comfort, and nothing is more comfortable and unrestricting than exercise clothing. Still, there's something preposterous about the idea of an entire nation outfitted in track suits and running shoes for sitting on the couch, watching movies on video, and eating chips. Maybe by wearing exercise clothes we're assuaging our guilt about being lazy and out of shape, the way somebody who's overweight might drink a diet soda with an ice-cream sundae.

At the David Barton Gym, at six o'clock on a week night, the StairMasters, lined up four to a row, three rows deep, in front of the large-screen video monitor playing "Pee Wee's Big Adventure," are all occupied by men, their legs pumping like pistons. They are wearing tank tops belted over biker shorts, or cut-off chinos and sweatshirts cropped to show off their six-packs, with athletic socks and sneakers. There is a high incidence of tattoos, and baseball caps worn backward. The individualists sport do-rags, Keds high-tops, thermal leggings. An occasional woman wanders, invisible, through their midst. A mirror that runs the length of the left wall reflects a frieze of beefy men keeping a careful eye on themselves as they lift and lower, lift and lower heavy weights, their muscles rippling slowly. Conversation is infrequent and brief. The crowd, according to the receptionist, consists mostly of actors, models, fashion-magazine editors, famous hair stylists—Oribe is a regular.

The walls are white; the floor is paved with industrial-gray carpet laid in rectangles. There is no décor to speak of, only the jungle of matte-steel machines, upholstered black. There are no amenities or frills. Variety is not what David Barton has to offer. A trainer himself, he has stocked his gym with the equipment he has deemed the best, and nothing more. There is only one type of stationary bike (recumbent); there are StairMasters but no Lifestep machines. "I'm a purist about gyms," Mark Cattano, one of Barton's free-lance trainers, says. "I come to the gym to lift weights. You don't need all the bells and whistles."

In the six months since it opened, David Barton's has established itself as one of the city's more "serious" bodybuilding gyms. Rich Barretta, Mr. America of 1987, now a trainer who works out of Barton's gym exclusively, puts his clients on a low-fat regimen, with protein three times a day, to build new muscle mass and to reduce the body fat that blankets it, for that lean, carefully delineated, "cut" look. He concentrates on a specific group of muscles for each hour-long session. Barretta claims that he prefers training women—that they have better hand-eye coördination, that they work more intensely, and that they aren't so stuck on the numbers. "You never hear one woman ask another, 'So how much can you bench-press?' " he explains. One of his clients, a newspaper columnist whose job it is to be out to dinner every night, on the town, admits that the diet is often inconvenient, because so many foods are off-limits; he trains with Barretta six mornings a week. A first-time observer, amazed at these Spartan ways, asked him how long he intends to live like that. "Until I get a date," he replied.

A quick glance around David Barton's gym is enough to convince even the most casual observer that bodybuilding, like fashion, is a subculture unto itself, with an aesthetic that seems incontrovertible to insiders and utterly mysterious, not to say grotesque, to the uninitiated—an aesthetic that, if the scene here is any indication, seems to have played right into a certain gay male obsession with virility and all its trappings. Among the guys working out with weights are plenty with muscles so distended that they might have been inflated with a bicycle pump—guys who would look to the layman like Popeye, although in their own and in each other's eyes they appear godly, just as fashion enthusiasts decked out in outlandish clothes might find one another attractive and witty but strike the average person as ridiculous. Fashion enthusiasts, however, put on and take off the costumes they wear, while bodybuilders become their costumes.

The use of supplements, and worse, is reportedly widespread. Cattano, who proudly volunteers that his eighteen-inch arms are all natural, deplores steroids and says that he has never competed as a bodybuilder because he's put off by the fact that they're so commonplace in the sport. "That's cheating," he insists. He started lifting weights when he was thirteen, he says, "for fear of getting beat up," and even now, fifteen years later, he claims that building muscles isn't for him an end in itself. "I don't lift weights to get onstage in a pair of bikini briefs and flex." He says he likes Barton's gym because it's down-to-business. When he first came to Manhattan, he worked out at Better Bodies, and while he says he has lots of respect for Brian Moss as an entrepreneur he claims that he prefers to work out at Barton's, if only because the atmosphere there isn't so "cruise-y": at Better Bodies, he says, he used to get interrupted on a regular basis by guys who would come up and ask him what time it was.

AT midnight on a Thursday at the sprawling World Gym, at Sixty-fourth and Broadway, which is owned by Arnold Schwarzenegger and open twenty-four hours, the atmosphere is mellow, despite the loud, up-tempo music. The ceiling fans are still. The traffic outside has thinned. On the treadmills and the free weights and the StairMasters and the Cybex machines, upholstered in teal-blue vinyl, half a dozen clients go about their workouts quietly, with an air of preoccupation. The dress is low-key verging on sloppy—the kind of clothes people who live alone wear at home. In front of the windows overlooking Lincoln Center, a woman makes her way down the row of Lifecircuit machines. She's a picture editor at the *Times*, and says she comes here when she leaves her office, at eleven; she is wearing royal-blue spandex tights and a big T-shirt that says "I'll see you in CUBA." Her colleague, a *Times* photographer in a big T-shirt and baggy purple shorts, says he spent the evening covering a murder in Brooklyn, went home and had something to eat, then came to the gym.

Over the course of the next hour, a few more people drift in: a concierge from a building on Central Park South, who works the night shift; a production assistant at ABC News, who gets off at eleven; a financial researcher who works nine to five but often ends up exercising late at night, he says, "because I can't get my shit together." What had he done before coming to the gym on this particular night? "Took a nap, ate, talked on the phone too long."

In the ladies' locker room, an art dealer wearing red nail polish and half-gloves from Gold's Gym is popping vitamins. She says she works out late because it's when she has the most peace of mind, and she doesn't have to keep calling her office. Tonight she came directly from a black-tie benefit, a dance performance followed by a dinner; she keeps special hangers for her evening gowns in one of her three lockers.

A lawyer wearing navy gym shorts and a white T-shirt says he usually comes around two in the morning—this evening he's early. Does he work such long hours? "No," he says as he steps onto the Versa-Climber, a ladder machine. "I'm just a late-night person. I've never slept all that much. This place is tailor-made for people like me."

DURING a recent trip to New York, Franco Moschino, the Italian designer, was struck by how body-conscious and compulsive people had gotten, with their lives arranged around their exercise regimens. No cigarettes, no alcohol, no meat, no fat. No fun. When he got back to Milan, Moschino phoned his trainer. "Don't call me," he told him. "I'll call you." ♦

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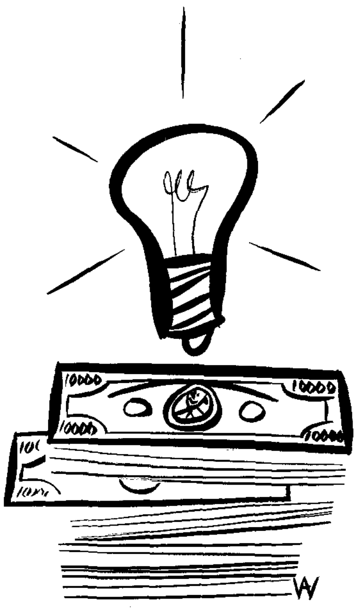
## ANNALS OF INVENTION

# THE FLASH OF GENIUS

*Bob Kearns and his patented windshield wiper have been winning millions of dollars in settlements from the auto industry, and forcing the issue of who owns an idea.*

*by John Seabrook*



IN November, 1962, Bob Kearns was driving his Ford Galaxie through the streets of Detroit when it started to rain lightly. Kearns turned the wipers on low. In those days, even the most advanced wipers had just two settings, one for steady rain and one for heavy rain; in a mizzling rain, they screeched back and forth across the glass, mesmerizing the driver, and occasionally causing accidents. Kearns' vision was already impaired as a result of an accident nine years earlier, when, on his wedding night, he was hit in the left eye by a flying champagne cork. Now, straining to see through the windshield, half thinking about his lousy wipers and half thinking about his bad eye, Kearns had what the *Wall Street Journal* later called "the kind of inspiration that separates inventors from ordinary people." He thought, Why can't a wiper work more like an eyelid? Why can't it blink? The idea for the intermittent windshield wiper entered his mind.

Sometime this year, a little more than three decades after his good idea came to him, Kearns will go to trial in a suit he has brought against General Motors. Kearns, who is sixty-five years old, has already defeated Ford and Chrysler in court, and he stands to collect more than twenty million dollars from them for infringing his patents on the intermittent windshield wiper. After the G.M. trial, Kearns will start on foreign automakers, beginning with Ferrari, and working his way through virtually the entire automobile industry worldwide. His remarkable success has made him one of the most famous inventors in the country, a hero to thousands of inventors with their own patent-infringement horror stories to tell. To others, he is a barnacle that has fastened itself to the underside of our patent system so tenaciously that the most powerful corporations in the world cannot pry it off.

Kearns is a small man, a few inches taller than elfin. His voice is high, nasal, and toneless, and his shoulders are stooped, perhaps from years of peering down at patent texts. His skin is pinkish, and his hair is startlingly white. According to Dennis, his oldest son, it turned white all at once, in 1976, when Kearns took apart an intermittent-windshield-wiper apparatus made by Mercedes and discovered that the great German carmaker had apparently infringed his wiper patents, too.

Kearns represented himself against Chrysler, and will do so again against G.M. His offices, Kearns Associates, are directly across the street from the Detroit federal courthouse, where his cases are tried. He can usually be found at his desk, half hidden behind heaps of motions and countermotions and books on trial procedure. The Associates are mainly Kearns' family. He has six children, and the lawsuit has become the dominant event in their lives—and now *their* children are growing up with the case. The family is close, and the lawsuit has brought them closer. Four of his children have worked or are working full time for their father. The case is what they do. None of them have any legal training. They have learned on the job to write briefs, service documents, and deal with maneuvers pulled on them by the hundreds of lawyers

ANDERS WENNGREN

working for the Big Three. "For the kids, the lawsuit is all we've ever known," says Kearns' daughter Kathy, who is thirty-one. "I mean, for us this is normal."

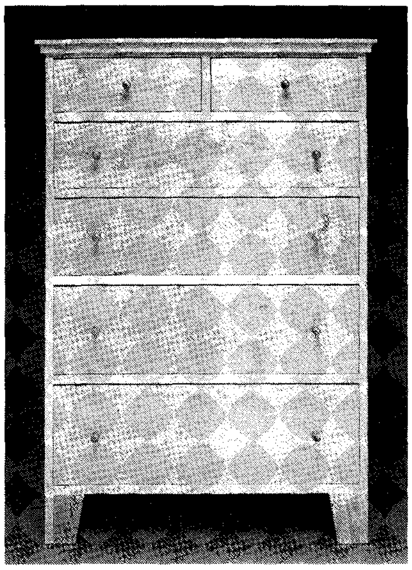
There is widespread feeling in patent departments of corporations around the country that Kearns' case represents a frightening precedent. A California inventor named Gilbert Hyatt, who was recently granted a basic patent on the microprocessor, is the latest example of the trend. In theory, Hyatt has billions coming to him from the dozens of corporations that use microprocessors. "This kind of stuff makes people who work for corporations very nervous," Marty Adelman, a law professor and patent expert at Wayne State University, says. "The story today is not the big company screwing the little guy but the little guy screwing the big company. It's getting easier and easier for the little guy to do it."

The United States patent system is designed for the independent inventor—for the person whom Nikola Tesla described as "the lone worker who follows the fleeting inspiration of a moment and finally does something that has not been done before." Two hundred years ago, when Thomas Jefferson created our patent system, all inventors were independent. Now most inventors work in huge corporate research centers. Individuals surrender their ideas to the corporation, and for doing so they receive regular salaries. But the patent system, together with the law that has accrued around it, still rests on the eighteenth-century idea of the inventor, and in court a lone inventor with a patent is a formidable opponent for any corporation to face. "I read all the patent cases, and rarely has there been a case in the last five years where the corporation has beaten an independent inventor," Adelman says. "I tell all the corporate people who call me to testify against individuals, 'Jesus, guys, you're up against it.' "

The most frightening thing about Kearns, from the automobile companies' point of view, is that he is not particularly interested in money. He wants justice. "They think they can pay me thirty million dollars and put me on a park bench," he says. "Well, Bob Kearns is not somebody's lackey." When I first met him, a few months after he received ten million dollars from Ford, he was living by himself in a small, dark unfurnished apartment in Houston. A sleeping bag was on the floor, and boxes of legal documents were everywhere—on the floor, on the kitchen counters, stacked on the toilet. He has since bought a Colonial house and some property on the eastern shore of Maryland (it's right next to a house owned by Mario Boyardee, the canned-spaghetti heir), but he hardly ever goes there. He sleeps on friends' couches around Detroit, or on the floor of his office. He says he simply wants to make windshield wipers. That is all he has ever wanted. He will go on suing until automobile companies around the world are stopped from manufacturing his wiper, and he can make it himself.

THE United States Patent and Trademark Office is in Crystal City, a government development in Arlington, Virginia. The buildings are glass and steel, and sleek, in the modern federal style, and the place has a sort of splendid isolation about it which goes nicely with being the city of invention. On the ground floor of the Patent Office is the Search Room, a vast space filled with patents. The Patent Office has the largest collection of patents in the world. Here or upstairs, in the library, are Balinese patents and Manchurian patents, and English patents dating back to 1623. There are German dyestuff patents that were confiscated by the United States during the First World War and became part of the foundation of the American chemical industry. More than five million United States patents have been issued since 1790, when the first one went to Samuel Hopkins, of Pittsford, Vermont, for a new way of making potash, and they are all stored here, in paper form, stacked face up in an immense lattice of metal cubbyholes—about a hundred bright ideas to each cubby, and thousands of inspirations to each long, dark row. Feathery dust lies on some of the older patents. Patent searchers can be found in the aisles, scouring their fingertips lightly together to remove the dust, and plucking flakes of rotting patents from their jackets and sweaters.

A graph of the fall and rise in the popularity of patents over the last hundred years would look like this: U. Hav-



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ing weathered a long siege of antimonopoly sentiment in the middle of this century, patents are now almost as popular as they were in the eighteen-nineties. Last year, the Patent Office received 185,446 patent applications, more than in any previous year, and 109,728 patents were granted, almost twice as many as a decade ago. The Patent Office cites these numbers as evidence that the spirit of Edison and Bell is alive, that America is as innovative as ever. This may be true. It is certainly true that patents are more valuable than they used to be.

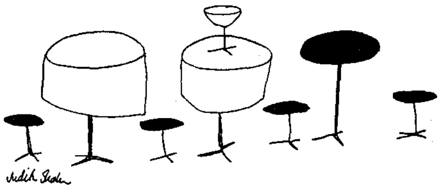
One reason is the influence of a new patent court, the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, which was created in 1982 in part to hear all patent appeals. Before that, patent appeals went to circuit courts of appeal. Most judges despise patent cases. A patent case can tie up a judge's calendar for months, sometimes for years, and often involves technical issues that the judge doesn't understand. Also, patent law is maddeningly subjective and imprecise, and apt to plunge all but the stoutest minds into dizzying swirls of logic. In a patent case a judge is asked to dissect the indivisible stream that is technical progress, to say where one man's inspiration ends and another's begins. For these reasons, circuit judges tended to dismiss patents as invalid simply to get rid of the cases. Between 1950 and 1975, three out of every four patents in the circuit courts were ruled invalid or not infringed. Certain circuits were notorious for their hostility toward patents: in the Eighth Circuit, almost no patents were held valid. The federal circuit court was created to bring fairness and logic to the system, and most people agree that it has. It has also dramatically increased the value of patents. The court has found three out of every four patents valid or infringed. Of eleven judges who sit on the court, five are former patent attorneys, so they are inclined to be more sympathetic to patents than most people are. In the federal circuit, patents are held to be valid until proved otherwise, and not the other way around.

In the last decade or so, the boundaries of what is patentable have expanded. In 1972, a molecular engineer named Ananda Chakrabarty applied for a patent on a microbe he had engineered that would help break down crude oil. The Patent Office rejected his application, citing a clause in the patent code which says that life forms are not patentable. Chakrabarty appealed, and in 1980 the Supreme Court ruled in his favor, 5–4, creating a brand-new sector of intellectual property: life. Last February, the National Institutes of Health applied for thousands of patents on human genes. The prospect that the United States government may soon own the gene that causes, say, green eyes has naturally created a certain amount of controversy, with some people predicting a kind of land grab at the cellular level—the Japanese patenting brown eyes, Swedes patenting blond hair, Italians patenting Roman noses.

Independent inventors are pleased by the renewed popularity of patents, because stronger patents give them greater leverage with the manufacturers and licensing companies they sell their inventions to. Patents granted to independent inventors rose thirty-seven per cent in the last half of the eighties. Automobile and computer manufacturers—businesses that assemble many pieces of technology into a product, as opposed to businesses whose product is a single technology—are not so pleased. They now have to pay royalties for parts that used to be free; or, if they decide to infringe a patent, they can no longer be reasonably confident of getting away with it. The number of patent-infringement cases in litigation in 1990 was fifty per cent greater than the number in 1980, and the average damage award has tripled.

The boom in intellectual property has been good for the Patent Office; patents are its principal source of income. Last year, the Patent Office took in two hundred and forty-five million dollars from patent and trademark fees, its best year ever. It has raised the number of its patent examiners to fourteen hundred and forty-six. (In 1980, there were nine hundred and forty-nine.) They work on six floors above the Search Room, their desks and floors awash in patent applications. The Commissioner of Patents has a spacious office on the top floor of the building.

Harry F. Manbeck, a trim, forceful, no-nonsense sort of fellow, who was until recently the commissioner, is naturally pleased with the robust good health that the patent system currently enjoys. "I think there is an increasing awareness of the importance of technology in America, and of the need to protect our technology from incursions by others," he said not long ago. "Having said that, I think it is remarkable, isn't it, that the system that was used for granting the first patent"—he waved toward a framed copy of that document, hanging on a wall behind a secretary—"is essentially the same as the system used in granting Patent No. 5,000,000, for . . ." He shot a glance, over his spectacles, toward an aide.



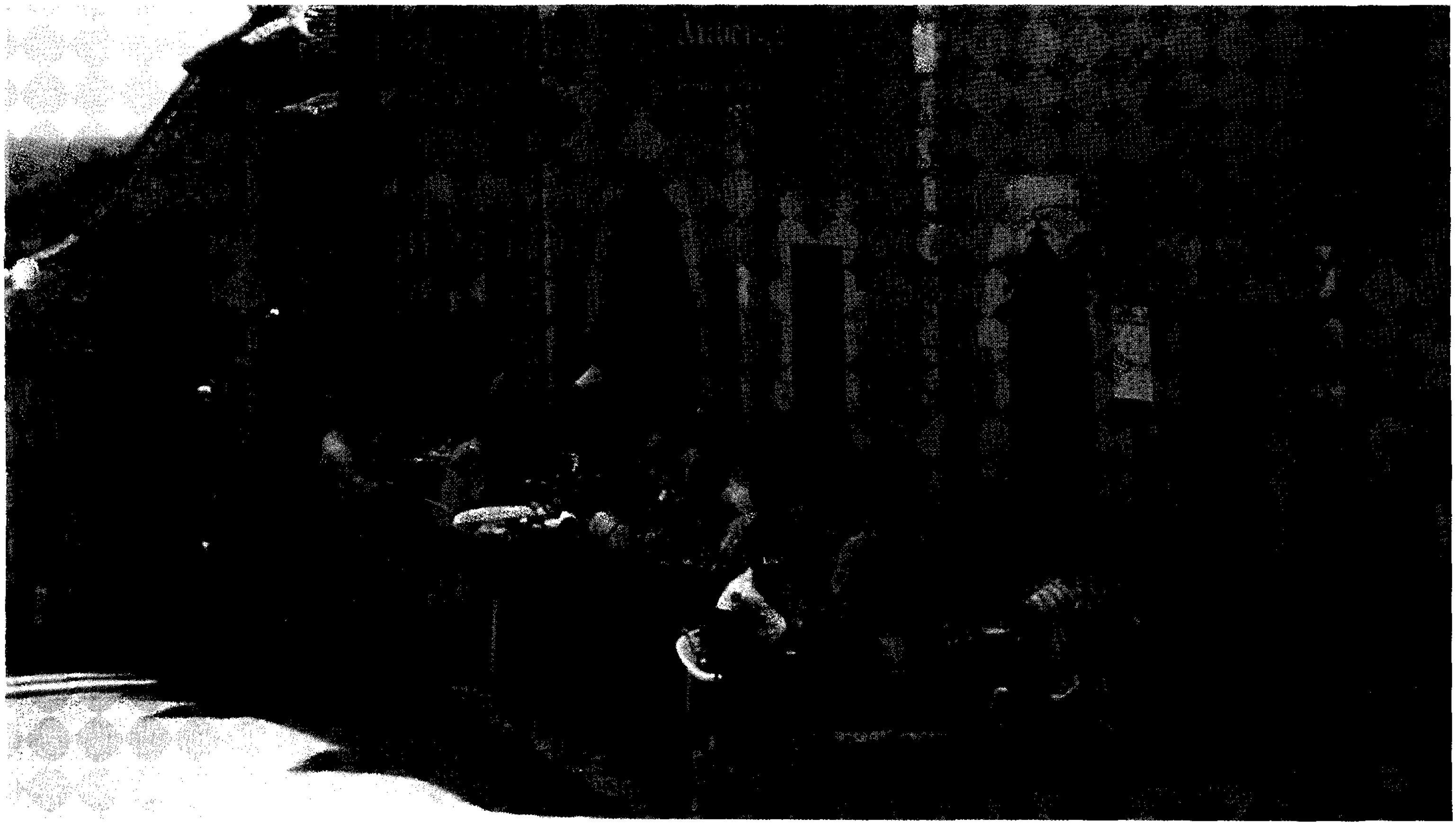
"Ethanol Production by *Escherichia Coli* Strains Co-Expressing Zymomonas PDC and ADH Genes," said the aide, reading from a clipboard.

"Right," Manbeck said. He leaned back, laced his hands behind his head, and directed his gaze out the window. Across an expanse of the Potomac floodplain, airplanes were landing at National Airport.

Bob Kearns grew up in River Rouge, a working-class neighborhood on the west side of Detroit. Two things about the place captured Kearns' imagination. One was Our Lady of Lourdes Cathedral, a big red brick Catholic church, which, he remembers, imported water from the real Lourdes. The other thing was the Ford Motor Company's Rouge plant, the largest industrial complex in the world. Kearns' father, who was a roll turner for the Great Lakes Steel Corporation, had once taken his son to visit the Rouge, and Kearns recalls that he had been "just so impressed by the magnitude of what Ford's was doing." Lumber from Ford forests; ore and coal and coke from Ford mines; silica sand from Ford quarries, for making windshields; rubber from Ford plantations in Fordlandia, in Brazil, for making tires—all flowed into the Rouge aboard Ford trains and Ford ships, to be refined and machined and assembled into Fords. At the Rouge, a car could be made from raw materials in four days.

As a teen-ager, Kearns worked in some of the job shops that used to fill the streets and alleys of Detroit. One place made the molding around the opera windows on Cadillacs. That was its entire business. Another place made the dies for the tools that were used to install one part of the landing gear of C-5

## *"A world that seems to be working right for a change."*



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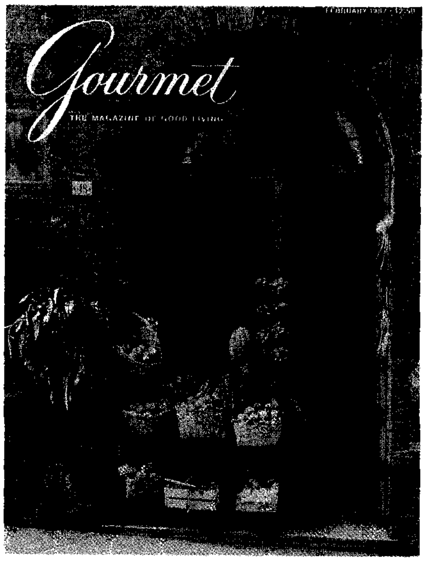


transport planes. The father of one of Kearns' friends had designed a better car-door handle—the familiar bar of curved steel with the push button under it—which helped prevent the door from opening if the car rolled. The man made a fortune supplying G.M. "The automotives, the automotives," Kearns once said to me. "That's all there was. If you were an inventor, and you really wanted to reach people, you invented for the automotives. I remember when Charley Wilson"—the president of G.M. in the forties and fifties—"said, What's good for G.M. is good for America. I really believed that was true."

Kearns' first invention was a comb that dispensed its own hair tonic. It did not get beyond the model stage. He experimented with an amplifier for people who had undergone laryngectomies and with a new kind of weather balloon. In 1957, he invented a navigational system that he hoped the military would use in its Sidewinder missiles. His ex-wife, Phyllis, remembers him dancing her around the kitchen and saying he was going to buy her two Cadillacs, one for each foot. "It was so exciting," Phyllis recalls. "It was always so exciting, living with Robert—such an adrenaline high." The navigational system didn't pan out, either. Kearns tried again.

When the idea for the intermittent wiper came to him, Kearns and his wife and their four young children were living in a brick house on Rutherford Street, on the north side of Detroit. Kearns, who had a master's in mechanical engineering from Wayne State University, was commuting to Case Western Reserve, in Cleveland, where he was working toward his Ph.D. He believes that his great idea grew in some mysterious way out of the eye injury he had received on his wedding night, in a country inn in Ontario. "Phyllis was in the bathroom, you know, changing, and I was sitting on the bed opening the champagne. And I'd never opened champagne before. And—pow! The cork goes off, hits me directly in the left eye, I fall back on the bed bleeding all over the sheets, Phyllis comes out of the bathroom screaming. I mean, it was a mess."

Kearns worked on the wiper on weekends during the first half of 1963. He constructed a glassed-in office for himself on one side of the basement, where he could work without interference from the kids. The other half was Phyllis's laundry room. "I'd be over here, doing laundry, up to my ears in kids, and he'd be over there behind the glass with his feet up," Phyllis recalls. "Well, he said he did his best work with his feet up."

By the summer, Kearns had built a working model of his invention. He could vary the time the wipers dwelled at the base of the windshield; he could vary the speed with which they swept it; he had even figured out a way of making the wipers automatically adjust their interval to the amount of water on the glass. He put his wiper control in a red metal box that on the outside had the words "For Engineering Tests Only. Do Not Open. Proprietary Design Property of Kearns Engineers," and two friends installed the box in the Galaxie.

Phyllis: "If it rained, we would stop whatever we were doing, run out to the car, turn the wipers on, and drive around. Doing life tests, Robert called it."

Bob: "I had figured out that the elasticity of rainwater was different from the elasticity of hose water, and I wanted to set the thing just right."

Phyllis: "Oh, I felt so proud, driving that car in the rain. I'd get both my hands right up at the top of the steering wheel, where people passing could see them, so they knew I wasn't just switching the wipers on and off."

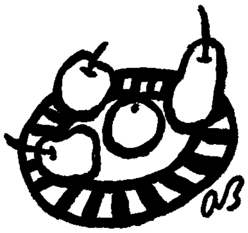
In October, Kearns decided that the time had come to demonstrate his invention to a car manufacturer. He chose Ford, because it had supplied him with some wiper motors to experiment on and because "to me Ford was always the greatest." Through his brother Marty, who worked in body engineering at Ford, he made contact with a man named John Ciupak, who he believed "had a substantial position in windshield wipers," and Ciupak said he should come over to the engineering complex in Dearborn, Ford's headquarters. Kearns drove the Galaxie over. He met Ciupak inside, and brought him out to the parking lot. He demonstrated variable speed, variable dwell, and moisture responsiveness. He let Ciupak try. They spent about forty-five minutes at it altogether, and Ciupak seemed impressed. However, he explained to Kearns that his field was wiper linkages and blades—that Joe Neill, the executive engineer, was the man Kearns needed to speak to.

Three days later, Kearns, once again driving the Galaxie, reappeared for his appointment with Neill. He was surprised to find about ten Ford engineers waiting for him in the parking lot. They took turns running the wipers; they poked around under the hood; they crawled under the dash. One at a time, several engineers took Kearns aside and asked him how his wiper worked. "I didn't want to tell them how I'd done it, but I didn't want to be impolite, either," Kearns recalls. Eventually, Neill appeared. He had a Mercury brought out of the lab, and, keeping Kearns at a distance, demonstrated to him that, as chance would have it, Ford was working on an intermittent wiper, too. Nonetheless, Neill said, Ford would like to look at Kearns' invention, if Kearns would like to show it to Ford.

Neill then said he would like to know how much Kearns' wipers cost to build. He also arranged for Kearns to get instructions on Ford's specification tests: the wipers had to run three million cycles, and they had to be able to operate at two hundred and seventy degrees, the maximum temperature under the hood. Kearns left in a state of euphoria. Many years later, recalling that day in a court document, he wrote, "I was in heaven!"

TED DAYKIN was one of the Ford engineers who came out into the parking lot to inspect Kearns' Galaxie in 1963. Daykin spent thirty-eight years, his entire career, working as an engineer at Ford, and took early retirement two years ago. He is almost exactly the same age as Kearns, received a similar education, and also devoted many years to windshield-wiper experiments, but the two men are nothing alike. Daykin looks about ten years younger than Kearns, and he appears to be one of the steadiest of men. He and his wife, Prill, live in a spacious ranch-style house in Dearborn, within a mile of the Ford engineering laboratories where Ted did his life's work. Around the living room are framed photographs of the Daykin family: their daughter, Elizabeth, who is also an engineer at Ford; Elizabeth's husband, Gregory, who works in product planning for General Motors; and the Daykins' son, Robert, who works on the Pontiac account for a local advertising agency.

Daykin began experimenting with windshield wipers in 1957, when his supervisor asked him to design an electric wiper motor. Electricity was the new auto technology then. Electric windows, electric locks, electric trunk catches were the latest gadgets. But wipers were one of the quiet backwaters of automotive technology. The standard wiper was driven by intake from the engine manifold, which was connected by a series of hoses to the wiper motor. The wipers wiped from the center of the windshield out, leaving a big unwiped V in the middle.



Ford had asked Daykin and his colleagues to invent a wiper system in which the blades moved parallel to each other. "See, Chrysler had come out with parallel blades in 1955, and people liked them," Daykin says. "So Ford wanted parallel blades. But the problem with parallel blades is that your surface area is too large for the mechanism to drive the wipers effectively." Daykin's electric motor, linked to parallel blades, appeared as a standard feature on 1959 Mercurys and as an option on 1959 Lincolns, and it was immediately popular. At that time, the beauty of the option business was just beginning to dawn on the auto industry. By keeping the base price of the car low—even selling the car at a loss—Ford could bring customers into the dealerships, then sell them a bunch of options that were extremely profitable for Ford.

Windshield wipers were a potentially rich source of options. "The success of those parallel blades got management thinking, Well, what other wiper options can we come up with?" Daykin says. "So I was told to organize a windshield-wiper group, and to play around and see what else we could invent. You know, a lot of people don't really spend a lot of time thinking about their wipers. They turn them on, they turn them off, and that's about it. But the fact is that there are dozens of inventions that go into the way your wipers work. What causes wipers to complete their wipe cycle when they're turned off mid-wipe? How, when they have returned to the base of the windshield, do they park themselves out of the driver's sight? In the industry, we call that feature 'depressed park.' How are wipers synchronized with the wash mechanism—what makes the wiper go on automatically when you push the washer, and give you two or three wipes? How about the rear-window wiper? Well, when you talk about that stuff you're talking about the inventions of windshield-wiper engineers." In the early sixties, Daykin and his colleagues busied themselves with inventing features like those. "Of course, one of the things we worked on was the intermittent wiper. How do you design a circuit where the wiper comes to a stop at the base of the windshield and then goes into its cycle again? The intermittent wiper was—Well, I won't say it was the Holy Grail for wiper engineers. But it was the obvious next step for wipers to take."

The basic problem to solve in inventing an intermittent windshield wiper was the timing device—the thing that sends current to the wiper motor at regular intervals. What should the timing device be? One of the engineers working with Daykin had designed a circuit that relied on a bimetallic timer. The timer worked like a thermostat, on the principle that two different kinds of metal will expand and contract at different rates when their temperature changes. The problem with this invention was that it took some time to heat up. On very cold days, it might not work at all. Also, getting the wiper to dwell for short periods was difficult, because of the time it took for the switch to heat and cool.

In late 1961, Ford's principal supplier of windshield-wiper components, a Buffalo-based company called Trico Products, brought a new intermittent device to Ford. It was a small vacuum chamber, about the size and shape of a bathtub stopper, that contained a plunger and spring, and had two small air hoses attached to it. The outlet hose ran to the engine manifold, and the inlet hose ran to the dashboard, where it was attached to a small dial. The engine, as it cooled itself, sucked in air through the outlet hose, producing suction in the vacuum chamber, and so drawing the plunger down and compressing the spring. The driver used the dial mounted on the dash to control the flow of air into the vacuum chamber. The spring moved a switch in the wiper circuit to the "off"

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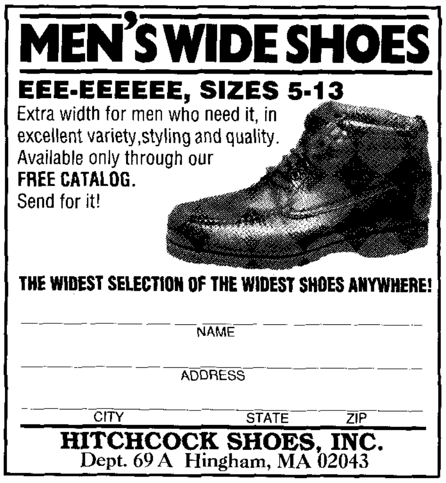
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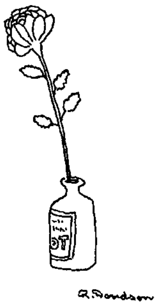
position, and the wipers dwelled. The spring eventually caused the plunger to rise, and moved the switch to the "on" position. The wipers wiped.



As a piece of engineering, the Trico system was not especially distinguished. It was something of a Rube Goldberg contraption. It had twenty-nine moving parts, which meant a lot of potential for breaking down. When the driver accelerated, the vacuum was insufficient to run the intermittent mode, and the wipers would default to high speed. Trico, in trying to sell the wiper to Ford, advertised this as a specially designed passing feature—useful, say, in overtaking a truck on a rainy day. "The engineers saw it for what it was, which was a design flaw," Daykin says. "But the planners thought that the passing feature was really neat." Management decided to offer Trico's intermittent wiper as an option on 1965 Mercurys, and the wiper division went to work developing it. This was the intermittent wiper that Kearns saw when he paid his first visit to the engineering building.

Kearns' intermittent wiper was an elegant piece of engineering. It had four parts, and only one of them moved. It was a leap forward, beyond electricity and into electronics. Though Kearns did not realize it, he was on the threshold of the next revolution in automotive technology. He had worked for the Bendix Corporation in the mid-fifties, and had some experience with electronic control systems, which were then used only in high technology, like computers. A transistor, a capacitor, and a variable resistor were the three basic components of Kearns' circuit. The resistor and the capacitor together were the timer, and the transistor worked as the switch. The resistor, which the driver could adjust with a knob, controlled the rate of current flowing into the capacitor. When the voltage in the capacitor reached a certain level, it triggered the transistor; the transistor turned on, and the wipers wiped once. The running of the wiper motor drained voltage out of the capacitor; it sank below the threshold level of the transistor, and the transistor turned off. The wipers dwelled until the capacitor recharged.

"There's no question that Dr. Kearns' wiper circuit was interesting," Daykin says. "He had a three-brush motor, with dynamic brake and intermittent on one speed only—his system was a concatenation of a lot of different ideas. But we figured there was just no way in the world it was patentable. An electronic timing device was an obvious thing to try next. How can you patent something that is in the natural evolution of technology?" Daykin shook his head. He said he had spent much of his last year at Ford helping to prepare for the Kearns case, and the experience had caused him to think a lot about the patent system. "I think about all those Ford engineers I worked with developing wiper systems. Dozens of inventors—maybe a hundred—contributed to your intermittent windshield wiper. There were men from Trico, Magnetti Marelli, Rover, Prestolite, Delco, General Motors, Chrysler, and Ford. I don't know who some of them were—nobody does. They were the real inventors of the intermittent windshield wiper, not Kearns."

Prill could be heard in the dining room, setting the table for a family lunch. "Patents were meant to encourage innovation, after all, not static ownership," Daykin says. "Can you imagine where we would be if each one of those engineers had gone after a patent? We'd all still be driving around with two-speed wipers."

HAVING received the go-ahead from Ford, Kearns began testing his intermittent wiper. He figured that putting it through three million cycles would take six months. He bought an aquarium, installed the wipers in it, filled the tank with a mixture of oil and sawdust to simulate a load on the wiper, and set it over on Phyllis's side of the basement. It was Phyllis's job, when her husband was away, to keep an eye on the tank; occasionally, she would stir its contents with a cooking spoon. When Kearns came home from Case Western Reserve on weekends, he devoted himself to wiper experiments. On Friday night, sometimes all night, Phyllis would watch the oscilloscope, an EKG-like monitor for measuring electrical impulses, while Bob tried components in different configurations. On Saturday, he would be out in the driveway all day, bent over the Galaxie, making adjustments. He would fill the neighbors in on his progress. A salesman from Motorola or Delco might stop by, with a quote on resistors. On Saturday evening, the whole family gathered in the living room and inked in circuit diagrams, for making printed circuit boards. On Sunday, after church, Bob drove Phyllis and the kids around Detroit, scouting out sites for the Kearns wiper factory. "Dad had picked out jobs for each of us," his son Tim recalls. "My brother Dennis was going to be the company lawyer, I was going to be the chief engineer, and my brother Robert would be the head mechanic." By the late fall of 1963, Phyllis was pregnant again. "How about a girl?" she remembers Bob saying. "We need a computer programmer."

The wipers completed their three-million-four-hundred-thousandth wipe on November 16, 1964. (Kearns had let the wipers run another four hundred thousand cycles for good measure.) He called Ford with the good news, but Ford didn't seem overexcited. His financial situation was becoming dire. His family was large; his income as a doctoral fellow was not, and he was spending a considerable portion of it on wiper components. Also, he needed money to get his patents. Phyllis was supportive—"I thought the sun was never going to set on Robert," she says—but Phyllis's mother had begun to wonder why her son-in-law didn't get a regular job in the auto industry, like so many of his classmates. "Oh, but giving up the rights to his patents would have killed Robert," Phyllis says. "He would have died."

Kearns finally took action: "I waited for a rainy day, then I drove over to see Dave Tann." Tann was one of six brothers who had expanded the business started by their father, a small tool-and-die shop, into the Tann Corporation, a midsize manufacturing company that supplied carmakers with various parts and tools—fenders, dashboards, hood ornaments, dies for stamping out hoods. He was the sort of man Kearns imagined himself becoming. Kearns brought Tann out to the car and showed him the intermittent wiper. "Dave got in the car, drove around awhile, and came back all excited," Kearns recalls. " 'This is great! This is great!' he kept saying. He wouldn't give me my car back. He said, 'Here, we'll swap. Take my Cadillac.' So

I drove that home, and he took mine." They agreed that Kearns would assign his rights to the intermittent wiper to Tann, and Tann would take over the cost of getting the patents. In addition, Tann would pay Kearns a thousand dollars a month to continue his wiper R. & D., plus royalties when the wiper went into production. Kearns went home that afternoon with his first year's payment, twelve thousand dollars in cash. "Robert came home, got me and the kids into the kitchen, and covered the whole kitchen counter with money," Phyllis says. "That was a great day."

Dick Aitken, Tann's patent attorney, filed the first patent application for Kearns' intermittent wiper in December of 1964. When it comes to writing patent applications, patent attorneys talk about "staking out the four corners of the invention," and Aitken did an excellent job of staking them as far apart as he could. The first patent was granted in November, 1967. Meanwhile, Tann had made contact with Ford, and he and Kearns had given a formal presentation to a group of Ford engineers and executives. "Dave bought a new car to make the demonstration with," Kearns says. "And that car was Henry Ford's favorite color—black. It had black everything. Black tires, black wheels, and black leather seats. Dave said, 'Black is what Ford likes? Well, we'll give 'em what they like.' That was how Dave Tann did things." The demonstration was a hit, and it led to a series of demonstrations to other parts of the Ford organization.

Finally, Roger Shipman, a Ford supervisor, announced to Kearns that he had "won the wiper competition." He told Kearns that his wiper would be used on the 1969 Mercury line. Kearns was given the prototype of a windshield-wiper motor to commemorate the occasion. The other engineers welcomed him aboard Ford's wiper team. Then, according to Kearns, Shipman asked him to show his wiper control to the rest of the team. Wipers were a safety item, Shipman explained, and the law required disclosure of all the engineering before Ford could give Kearns a contract. This sounded reasonable to Kearns, so he explained to the Ford engineers exactly how his intermittent wiper worked.

About five months later, Kearns was dismissed. He was told that Ford did not want his wiper system after all—that the other engineers had designed their own. Kearns remembers that one of the engineers taunted him as he was leaving. Then, about six months after the dismissal, Shipman called Kearns, told him his wiper still had a chance for the 1969 model year, and asked him to come in again. "And, just like a lover, I went back again," Kearns says. "Because what else could I do? Ford was my market. Plus I did not really believe at that time that Ford would infringe my patent. I mean, I believed in Ford. I'm a believer."

THOMAS JEFFERSON was the first superintendent of our patent system, and our first patent examiner. Among the public men of the late eighteenth century, he was by far the best qualified for the job. He was an inventor himself: he invented a moldboard for plows, a swivel chair, a pedometer, a camp stool, and a copying device, among other things. He was interested in inventors, and seems to have understood them.

Another quality that made Jefferson the right person to run the patent system was that he distrusted patents. Patents, being monopolies, were dangerous in a republic conceived in part as an anti-monopoly haven. Starting a patent system was like providing the young economy with enough rope to hang itself. Jefferson was familiar with the havoc that patents had caused in the British economy. In England, in the late sixteenth century, Elizabeth I had discovered that when Parliament refused to give her money she could raise it herself by selling monopoly rights to noblemen. In 1623, to put a stop to that practice, Parliament passed the Statute of Monopolies, which declared monopolies illegal. However, the statute contained an exception for patents: to encourage innovation, Parliament allowed genuine inventors the right to hold limited monopolies on their inventions.

The trouble was that Parliament did not figure out how to determine who was a genuine inventor and what a genuine invention was. It was easy for Elizabeth's successor, James I, and for his son, Charles I, to go on selling monopolies to bogus inventors who could afford to buy them. This was one reason that, in 1649, Parliament chopped off Charles's head.

Jefferson thought he could fix the ba-

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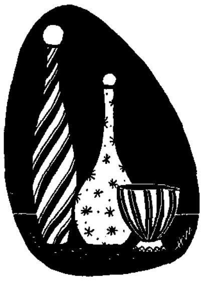
sic flaw in the British system. His solution was the principle of examination. The principle is that certain innovations have a quality that elevates them to the status of inventions, and thus makes them eligible to be held as private property, while innovations that lack this quality are the common property of humanity. Learned people can, by study and power of reason, determine which inventions deserve a patent and which do not. Examination is the greatest American contribution to the institution of patents, and it has been copied by virtually every industrial nation in the world. Like a lot of ideas associated with the Enlightenment, it sounds a lot better than it works.



Jefferson and his fellow-examiners struggled to come up with a definition for "invention." Jefferson declared that in order to be patentable an invention had to be new and useful, but he found that some new and useful inventions were too frivolous to be worth "the embarrassment of an exclusive patent," as he put it. He did make sure the law stated that a patent could go only to "the true and sole inventor." Of course, when Jefferson used the word "inventor" he had in mind a farmer or a small manufacturer who in the course of harvesting a crop or making a doorknob would discover a shortcut or devise a new tool that would make the job easier or the product better. The idea of an industrial-research laboratory, a place staffed by thousands of inventors working for a single organization, could hardly have occurred to Jefferson.

In 1906, a patent lawyer named Edwin Prindle published a series of articles in the magazine *Engineering* in which he explained to businesses how they could use patents to restrain trade. "Patents are the best and most effective means of controlling competition," he wrote. "They occasionally give absolute command of the market, enabling their owner to name the price without regard to cost of production. . . . Patents are the *only legal form of absolute monopoly*." Patent lawyers recommended the use of what are called improvement patents, by which the life of a patent—in the United States, its life is seventeen years—could be extended almost indefinitely. First, one had to get control of a basic patent on a new technology, and the best way of doing that was to organize a trust and buy the patent from the inventor. If no basic patent existed, the trust could simply buy up all the minor patents in the field. Then, every year or two, inventors working for the company could come up with a slightly improved version of the technology and patent it, and the seventeen-year clock would start over. The lawyers suggested hiring large numbers of inventors, to build a fortress of improvement patents around the basic patent and keep competitors far from the company's technology. These inventors would, of course, have to sign contracts surrendering the right to their ideas. While this was not in the spirit of the patent system designed by Jefferson, it was technically legal: the law could not prevent the inventor from assigning his idea, once it had become his private property, to someone else.

The first corporations were essentially large blocks of patents. Western Union grew from Samuel Morse's patents on the telegraph, International Harvester from Cyrus McCormick's patents on the reaper, General Electric from Edison's patents on the light bulb, and A.T. & T. from Bell's patents on the telephone. Independent inventors began to find it difficult to compete with inventors hired by the corporations. A lot of them took jobs in corporate research laboratories—they were willing to exchange the chance of getting rich for the certainty of a regular salary. The ones that remained independent turned to inventing gadgets and toys to survive. Opining on whether or not this is a good thing is one of the set pieces of technology histories. Some people see the rise of hired inventors as a natural part of the evolution of technology; others see it as a wrong turn.

James B. Conant: "As theory developed in physics and chemistry and penetrated into practice, as the degree of empiricism was reduced in one area after another, the inventor was bound to disappear."

John Kenneth Galbraith: "Technical development has long since become the preserve of the scientist and the engineer. Most of the cheap and simple inventions have, to put it bluntly, been made."

Philo Farnsworth: "We must not lose track of the fact that inventions as such,

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important inventions, are made by individuals and almost invariably by individuals with very limited means."

Nikola Tesla: "Invention is predominantly individualistic. Everything of prime moment comes from some individual unconnected with any commercial organization."

In 1969, Ford came out with a new, electronic intermittent windshield wiper, the first in the industry. It used a transistor, a resistor, and a capacitor in the same configuration that Kearns had designed. It cost Ford about ten dollars to make, and it sold for thirty-seven dollars. At first, Ford offered the intermittent wiper as a stand-alone option, and it sold slowly. Then Ford packaged it with another gadget—the remote-control side mirror, which was one of Ford's most popular options—and wiper sales took off. In 1974, General Motors began putting the intermittent wiper on its cars, and in 1977 it appeared on Chryslers. Saab, Honda, Volvo, Rolls-Royce, and Mercedes, among others, soon followed. By 1989, Ford alone had sold 20.6 million cars with the intermittent wiper, and made a profit that has been calculated at five hundred and fifty-seven million dollars. Altogether, about thirty million intermittent wipers are sold around the world each year.

Kearns tried to get an explanation from Ford, but he soon discovered that "there's a diode in the line when you talk to Ford—the information only goes one way." His lawyers wrote letters to Ford's legal department, informing it that Ford was infringing Kearns' patents. Eventually, they received a letter back saying that Ford was not infringing Kearns' patents and that, in any case, Kearns' patents were invalid. "I just felt very diminished," Kearns says. "It's like you're a nothing, you're a gnat. You don't count. You just don't count."

Kearns wanted Tann to sue Ford. "As a practical matter, we couldn't sue Ford for patent infringement, because they were one of the family's main sources of business," Tann said later, of his company. "We needed Ford's good will to keep our business alive."

Several years passed. Kearns got his patent rights back from Tann. He moved his family to Gaithersburg, Maryland, to take a job with the Bureau of Standards, testing the skid resistance of various kinds of road surfaces. Kearns was in his mid-forties now. On July 8, 1976, Dennis Kearns stopped in at a Mercedes service center, bought a wiper control, and brought it home to his father. Kearns went down to the basement and took it apart. "And I saw capacitor, resistor, transistor—it was all there," he recalls. "Even the great Mercedes had infringed my patents." He wandered distractedly out of his home, hitchhiked to Washington, and got on a Greyhound headed South. Somehow, he had become convinced that Richard Nixon wanted him to go to Australia, to build an electric car. "Then I realized I'd never spent any time with my kids. I'd been so consumed with my work on the wiper that I'd never even shown them how to fly a kite. So I went and bought these two kites. When the police picked me up a few days later, I was in Tennessee, in a park, holding these two kites."

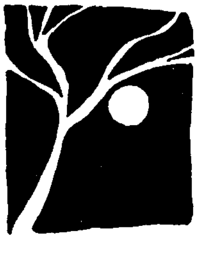
In 1978, Kearns filed suit against Ford for patent infringement. Eventually, he added other car companies to the suit, but Ford was the principal focus of his hatred. "I just had an overwhelming feeling that what Ford had done was wrong," Kearns says. "It was unjust, and it was illegal." In his suit he asked for three hundred and fifty million dollars in lost profits, multiplied by three—the maximum penalty for willful infringement—plus interest and costs, for a total of $1.6 billion.

"You'll be happy to know that race played no part in this decision."

Henry Ford loathed patents. One of Ford's lawyers once boasted, "There is no power on earth, outside of the Supreme Court, which can make Henry Ford sign a license agreement or pay a royalty." Ford thought that the patent system should be abolished, because, he said, it "produces parasites, men who are willing to lay back on their oars and do nothing," and because patents afford "opportunities for little minds, directed by others more cunning, to usurp the gains of genuine inventors—for pettifoggers to gain a strategic advantage over honest men, and, under a smug protest of righteousness, work up a hold-up game in the most approved fashion."

Ford's opinion of the patent system was galvanized by the Selden Patent. In 1879, George B. Selden, a resident of Rochester, had filed a patent application in which he claimed to have invented the automobile. In his application Selden described a machine with a gasoline-driven, combustion-type engine that sat in front of the driver; a clutch; a foot brake; a drive shaft; and front-wheel drive. Selden had never built such an automobile. He wasn't an especially skilled mechanic. He was a patent lawyer, in fact. Selden believed that in the not too distant future people were going to be riding around in motorized cars of the type he envisioned, and he wanted to have a monopoly on them.

For the next sixteen years, Selden kept his application pending in the Patent Office, using his professional skills to draw the process out, amending the application now and then, waiting for the men who were actually building automobiles to produce one that was marketable. In 1895, he decided that the moment had come, and he caused himself to receive Patent No. 549,160. An East Coast auto manufacturer named Albert Pope, who was backed by a syndicate of investors, made a royalty agreement with Selden and acquired the rights to his patent. In keeping with business practices of the day, Pope and his backers formed a trust, and called it the Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers. The A.L.A.M. declared that any car manufacturer that did not get a license from the trust and pay a royalty of one and a quarter per cent of the sales price of each car it sold would be infringing the Selden Patent and would be sued. By 1905, eighty-five per cent of the auto industry was under license to the A.L.A.M. Selden was promoted as the inventor of the automobile.



In 1903, Henry Ford, then an unknown engineer from Detroit, had formed the Ford Motor Company. He applied for a license from the A.L.A.M. but was judged to be merely a fly-by-night assembler of parts, not a bona-fide automobile manufacturer, and was turned down. Ford decided to make and sell his cars anyway. He announced that he had no intention of paying his tithe to the Selden Patent, that the patent was unjust, and that the machine Selden described could never have worked in the first place. The A.L.A.M. wasted no time in suing Ford for patent infringement. The drama of Ford, a barely educated, plainspoken Midwesterner, defying the entire automobile industry, as well as some of the most powerful interests on Wall Street, was irresistible to the public, and it made Ford famous.

Ford did not shrink from the attention. He expanded his position into a general attack on the patent system. "I believe absolutely in free competition, and in abolishing patents, which kill competition," he said. In "Monopoly on Wheels," a 1961 book about the Selden case, William Greenleaf writes, "By endowing his own struggle for a place in the sun with a luminous appeal to fundamental principles, [Ford] translated a wearisome patent suit into one man's struggle for the right to enjoy unhampered opportunity. This was a potent theme in a day when the politics of Progressivism was sweeping the land and the movement for social democracy was still nourished by the hopes and ambitions of the small businessman." In 1911, Ford won the Selden case on appeal, breaking the patent, destroying the A.L.A.M., propelling himself into the dominant position in the auto industry, and insuring that future generations of Americans would regard Henry Ford, not George Selden, as the inventor of the automobile.

For the rest of his life, Ford virtually ignored the patent system. "As a rule Ford adamantly refused to adopt parts and components patented by others," Greenleaf writes. "Instead, he ordered his engineers to evolve their own designs." Other carmakers designed their own parts, too. This gave the young automobile industry the unique advantage of having free access to technology as soon as it was invented. Ford was a kind of Promethean figure, taking a revolutionary new technology out of the hands of the élite and giving it directly to the people. This was not necessarily the best thing for those who invented the technology—the designers of carburetors, sparkplugs, radiators, rubber tires, power steering, overdrive, the convertible top, rack-and-pinion steering, the rear-window de-

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froster, cruise control, air bags, and intermittent windshield wipers. However, Ford, in defense of his position on patents, often pointed out that his own invention—a light, cheap, durable car that could be mass-produced, like matches or pins, at a time when the industry was committed to the automobile as a luxury product—would have been impossible if he had been forced to pay for the inventions of other men. "I invented nothing new," he once declared. "I simply assembled into a car the discoveries of other men behind whom were centuries of work, and the discoveries of still other men who preceded them. Had I worked fifty or even ten or even five years before I would have failed. So it is with every new thing. Progress happens when all the factors that make for it are ready, and then it is inevitable. To teach that a comparatively few men are responsible for the great forward steps of mankind is the worst sort of nonsense."

WHEN Kearns filed suit against the Ford Motor Company, in 1978, Ford did what corporations usually do in patent cases: it began stalling, in the hope that Kearns would lose heart or run out of money. Patent cases are richly endowed with opportunities for stalling. The heart of Ford's defense was that Kearns' patents were invalid, because according to the Doctrine of Nonobviousness his intermittent wiper was not an invention at all.

The Doctrine of Nonobviousness is the current solution to the problem that confounded Jefferson: how to define invention. Over the last two centuries, many people have tried to define it. Learned Hand, whom patent lawyers revere as one of the great patent judges of all time, wrote that the definition of invention was "as fugitive, impalpable, wayward, and vague a phantom as exists in the whole paraphernalia of legal concepts." The 1929 edition of "Walker on Patents," the standard patent textbook, stated, "What constitutes invention is a very perplexing question." In 1937, this was revised to read "An invention is the result of an inventive act." An inventive act was generally considered to be a flash of insight that comes when the inventor is not striving for it, as in the case of Nikola Tesla, who was strolling through a park in Budapest and reciting some lines from Goethe when the concept of alternating current suddenly came into his mind and he diagrammed it in the dust with a stick; or of Edwin Land, who was taking photographs of his three-year-old daughter one morning in Sante Fe and, when she asked him why the pictures couldn't be seen immediately, conceived the Polaroid process. The invention story was an important part of the invention itself.

Most judges are not scientists. The average judge's view of invention tends to have more to do with Coleridge's theories about the imagination than with the judge's experience inside an engineering lab. As the twentieth century got older, and the gap between the liberal arts and the applied sciences got larger, the problem got worse. The last straw came in 1941, when the Supreme Court issued its "flash of creative genius" decision, in Cuno Engineering Corporation v. Automatic Devices Corporation. The invention in question was the first cordless automobile cigarette lighter. The Court decided that it was not patentable, because it lacked the characteristics of an invention. Justice William O. Douglas, writing for the majority, stated that "the new device, however useful it may be, must reveal the flash of creative genius, not merely the skill of the calling."

Patent professionals began to feel that the legal view of invention was inconsistent with the way things actually got made, and that a more scientific, less romantic definition of invention was needed. A panel of patent experts produced the Doctrine of Nonobviousness, which became law in the Patent Act of 1952. The doctrine states that a patentable invention must be nonobvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention is made. While this definition is generally believed to be an improvement over the flash of genius, it isn't perfect: there is a how-many-angels-can-dance-on-the-head-of-a-pin aspect to nonobviousness which makes it possible to argue cases almost indefinitely, and often the side with more legal resources wins.

The lawsuit against Ford became Kearns' life. He put every penny he had into it. He was driven by an uncynical, almost spiritual belief in justice and an equally pure hatred of the automobile industry. At a hearing in 1980, Kearns said, "I want you to understand that I am wearing a little badge here, and that badge says that I am an inventor, and that badge says I am a net contributor to soci-

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ety. And it is like maybe you can't see the badge, and these other gentlemen can't see the badge, and I don't think anybody is going to be able to see the badge until my trial is finished in this courtroom and I will find out whether I am wearing the badge or not." After his breakdown over the Mercedes wiper, he was unable to work. He collected disability from his employer, the Bureau of Standards, and he and his son Tim assembled and sold digital-difference-to-analog converters out of the basement of their home in Gaithersburg. Tim says, "I guess you could say the lawsuit has ruined my father's life, but I don't choose to look at it that way. It *is* his life. If there's a tragic aspect to it, it is that my father has never invented anything else. It would be interesting to know how many people's lives have been saved by the intermittent wiper, and how many more lives could have been saved by his next invention. We'll never know, because he couldn't let this one thing go. But he just couldn't."

Phyllis Kearns stuck it out as long as she could. "We'd gear ourselves up for a hearing in ninety days," she says. "And then, on the eighty-ninth day, the phone would ring, and I would hear Bob screaming and yelling, and it would turn out that Ford had dumped a bunch of new documents on us, and the hearing would be postponed. Now, I had never heard shouting in the house before. My parents had never shouted. It got to the point where I just couldn't take it." Phyllis left her husband in 1980. "Robert expected me to have the same focus he did, and I just didn't have it."

FROM time to time, when I felt the concept of what a patent was slipping away, I would get in touch with Jerry Lemelson. Lemelson has received over five hundred patents—more than any other independent inventor alive. He inherited the title two years ago, upon the death of Edwin Land, who had five hundred and thirty-three. If Lemelson contines to average twenty patents a year—a pace he has sustained for three decades—he will catch Edison, who is the Hank Aaron of patents, with a thousand and ninety-three, by the time he is ninety-seven. Lemelson is sixty-nine now. He is a compact fellow, with a bald head and a comical New York squawk. He talks quickly. Behind each of his inventions is a story about how it came to him, and Lemelson tells it in the manner of a standup comedian, except that instead of a punch line at the end there is an invention.

Some people see life in terms of a photograph or a song or a short story; Lemelson sees it in terms of a patent. He thinks in patents, and sometimes he dreams in patents. Lemelson holds patents on machine-vision systems, an industrial robot, a fax machine, a copy machine, a tape-recorder drive, and a camcorder. It's hard to think of a technology he has not patented. Once, when I was talking to him on a cordless telephone, we had one of those electronic drifts which such phones are subject to. "Darn," Lemelson said. "I invented this thing, too."

When Lemelson invents, he first selects a particular field—say, microsurgery, which he is currently looking into. (He has a patent on an electronically controlled tourniquet.) He may hire a patent searcher to obtain copies of all the patents in that art or he may go down to the Patent Office and read the patents himself. He tries to imagine the path along which the art will develop, and to construct a patent application that sits squarely in the middle of it, so that even if the invention is never manufactured—and only one in every seven of Lemelson's inventions is actually made—his patent will be like a tollgate on a highway, at which all travellers must stop. Lemelson's great advantage over other inventors is that he writes all his patent applications himself. Though in theory a patent application is merely a rendering of the invention in language, in reality it is a kind of invention itself. "It takes great skill to craft a patent application," he says. "You have to stake the four corners of your invention broadly enough so that they give you maximum protection. You tend to avoid adjectives. You don't say 'transistor' when you can use 'controllable electronic valve'—that sort of thing. Of course, if you write too broadly you may invalidate your claim, because it will read on the prior art. But if you write too narrowly you may miss the thing about the technology that turns out to be truly valuable."

Last year, thanks to deals with Sony, Sanyo, Siemens, and others, Lemelson reportedly earned two hundred million dollars. He has filed suit against Motorola, Kodak, and Apple. Several years ago, he moved his residence from New Jersey to Nevada. "I don't mind saying that the reason for it is that it's a lot easier to litigate from out there," he says. "When I litigate in New Jersey or New York, it takes five to ten years to get to trial. Out in Nevada, it only takes a year."

Lemelson is a corporation's worst nightmare. To his critics he is merely an inventor of paper patents, who is exploiting the power that the patent system gives the independent inventor. As Lemelson sees it, though, litigation is the only way an independent inventor can protect his rights. "Occasionally, it is possible to earn money selling licenses—it's a lot easier these days than it used to be," he says. "But the simple fact is that most manufacturers would rather infringe a patent than pay a license. Have you heard of N.I.H.—the Not Invented Here syndrome? Well, it's a disease that American industry in general suffers from. The attitude is 'If we didn't invent it, we're not interested.' Or 'If it's such a good invention, how come we didn't think of it?' Or 'Hey, we have all these thousands of engineers on our payroll—why should we have to pay someone else for an idea?' It is virtually impossible for an independent inventor to invent for an American U.S. corporation. They're just not interested in inventions that they don't make."

CLIFFORD SADLER is an executive in the patent department of Ford. Sadler, known to his colleagues as Kip, is a lean, likable fellow with silver hair and a droll sense of humor. He listens to questions with his head to one side, his fingers making a lawyerly tent in his lap. "Electronics was simply the way the world was going," he told me recently. "I would say it's to Dr. Kearns' credit that he perceived this. But for Dr. Kearns to say he invented the electronic intermittent windshield wiper is, we feel, sadly unrealistic. Even in 1963, the resistor-capacitor timing device was a standard piece of engineering—it was sophomore-in-college stuff."

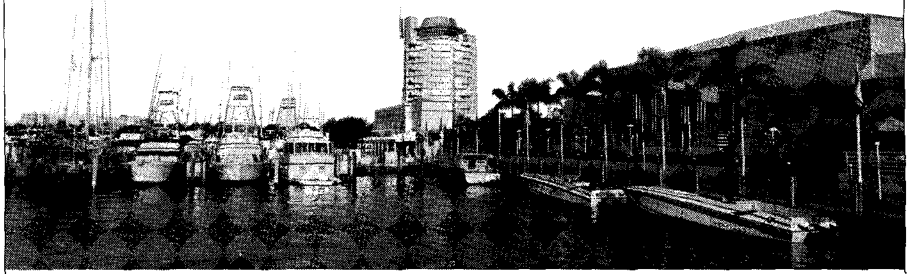
Sadler stretched his long legs out in front of him, rocked back in his chair, and sighed. "I think Dr. Kearns honestly believed he was part of the Ford design team," he said. "But Ford never saw it that way. As far as the engineers were concerned, Kearns was a sort of pest. He was always stopping by the lab and saying, 'Hey, what's going on? Need any help?'—that sort of thing." Sadler said that under no circumstances had Ford copied Kearns' design. "As for infringement, we had our lawyers examine Kearns' patents, and in their view the patents were invalid." He added that Kearns' great ambition—to be a supplier of windshield wipers to Ford—was misguided. "Ford has more than two thousand suppliers," he said. "In no case that I can think of has an independent inventor who has no manufacturing track record ever become a supplier to the auto industry. It just doesn't happen."

The Ford case came to trial in January, 1990—twelve years after it was filed. Most of Kearns' patents had expired by then. The waters of progress had closed over his head. Judge Avern Cohn divided the trial into two parts: one to determine whether Kearns' patents were valid and infringed, and, if they were, one to determine how much Ford should pay for infringing them.

Marty Adelman, the Wayne State law professor, was an expert witness in the Ford case. He told me that once Kearns got into the courtroom the odds of his winning shifted dramatically in his favor. "The inventor has a piece of paper with a big blue ribbon on it that issues from the Patent Office, and that he can wave around in front of the jury, and the jury tends to say, 'Oh, he has a patent, he must be right,' " Adelman said. "The corporation is placed in the very formidable position of trying to convince the jury that the Patent Office is wrong.

"The inventor has a story to tell. The cardinal rule for any patent attorney representing an independent inventor is to tell the invention story. You know—how he got the idea. It comes to him in a dream, or when he's in the shower or mowing the lawn. In Kearns' case, the guy gets hit in the eye with a champagne cork on his wedding night, he starts thinking about how the eye works, and ends up inventing a wiper that works like an eyelid. A classic invention story. That's not how things get invented in the lab. It's the heroic theory of invention versus the social theory of invention, and in front of a jury the former is going to win every time. The judge can lecture the jury till he's blue in the face about the Doctrine of Nonobviousness, but the flash of genius is what people want to hear."

Adelman thought for a moment and



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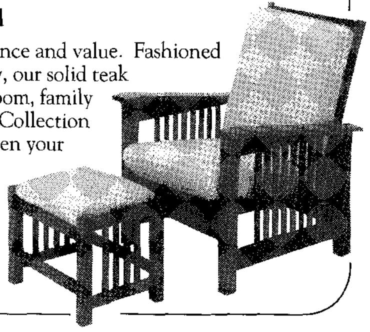

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added, "Of course, in the Kearns case the really scary thing is that Kearns is probably crazy. I mean, any rational holdup artist would have taken the money."

The first trial lasted three weeks, and the jury deliberated for another week. It found that Kearns' patents were valid and that Ford had infringed them. Ford, concerned about the size of the award that a jury in Wayne County might give Kearns, offered to settle the case for thirty million dollars. Kearns, against everyone's advice, turned the money down. "To accept money from Ford would have been like admitting it was O.K. for them to do what they did," he said.

So there was a second trial, and the second trial awarded Kearns $5.2 million, or about thirty cents a wiper plus interest. Kearns wasn't there for the verdict, having left the proceedings in protest two weeks earlier. Without even telling his family, Kearns had returned to Gaithersburg ("INVENTOR IN WIPER LAWSUIT DISAPPEARS" was the headline in the Detroit *Free Press*) got his camping equipment, pitched a tent in Little Bennett Regional Park, in West Virginia, and was living off pork and beans. Meanwhile, Judge Cohn, his patience wearing thin, suggested that if Kearns did not reappear and accept the money he might begin proceedings to determine whether or not Kearns was mentally competent. Finally, Kearns and Ford settled for $10.2 million.

On June 10, 1992, the night before the Chrysler verdict was announced, Kearns went out on the town with his family: Dennis; Tim; Tim's girlfriend, Francine; Maureen; Maureen's fiancé, Paul; and Kathy. Wherever they went in downtown Detroit, bartenders and waiters came up and wished them good luck. Kearns' spirits were high. He was confident that he had persuaded the jury to award him a sum of money large enough to hurt Chrysler seriously—he believed that the sum would be around forty million—and to send a message to corporations everywhere that patent infringement does not pay. "I believe I laid it on 'em pretty straight," he said.

The Kearnses ate dinner at the Pontchartrain Hotel. The possibility that the family might become extraordinarily wealthy the following morning wasn't discussed. The money was like a guest at the table to whom no one had been introduced. People talked about it obliquely. Everyone chose a number and put twenty dollars in a pool. After dinner was over and Kearns had left, Kathy said, "The main thing is that Dad seems happy." She said no one was under the illusion that the next day would be the end of anything. "I remember during the Ford case my father's girlfriend Jean used to say, 'Well, soon it will all be over, and he'll be mine.' Finally, I had to say, 'Jean, are you crazy? Don't you get it? This is never going to end.' "

The next morning, the courtroom began filling up at eight-thirty. Lou Mihaly, Kearns' college roommate, came, with his wife, Pinkie. The attendant from the Fort Washington Garage, where Kearns parked his car, came. Phyllis was there. She had driven up from Maryland the night before, with her son Robert. That night, Kathy had said to me, "It's obvious that Mom still cares for Dad. I mean, you can see it in the way she is just thrilled when he comes up behind her and puts his hands on her shoulders. But she just can't live with the lawsuit. It's too crazy." Now Phyllis said she was trying not to be nervous, by focussing on the fact that the jury had already made its decision, and nothing she felt or did could change it. She clenched her hands into fists and said, "Oh, I want willful infringement so badly."

Shortly after nine, the jury came in. Judge Cohn asked his clerk, Judy Cassady, if she would read the verdict. Ms. Cassady read, "Did you find that Dr. Kearns proved by clear and convincing evidence that Chrysler acted willfully when it infringed any of Dr. Kearns' patents? Answer: no." Phyllis gasped softly. Ms. Cassady went on, "What amount do you find is a reasonable royalty on a per-unit basis for the total of twelve million five hundred and sixty-four thousand one hundred and seven units? Answer: ninety cents per unit."

In the silence that followed, one could almost hear people multiplying 12.5 million by .9. It comes to about eleven and a half million dollars. With the years of interest, the total will probably be around twenty million.

Judge Cohn thanked the jurors for their efforts and dismissed them. Then he said goodbye to the lawyers. "I'm sure I will see you here again," he said in the direction of Kearns.

The Kearns family moved out into the corridor. The garage attendant reached for Kearns' hand, and Kearns accepted his congratulations somewhat awkwardly. Reporters encircled him. Kearns looked grim. "I would have to say I'm disappointed," he said. The family, standing around, seemed unsure of what to do. It wasn't clear whether anyone felt like whooping it up over eleven and a half million dollars; it was perfectly clear that it would be considered bad form if anyone did. They talked about who had won the pool. Eventually, Kearns said he had to get over to the office, and he moved toward the elevators, with a crowd of family and reporters trailing him. Down in the lobby, a woman pointed at the entourage and said, "Who's that?"

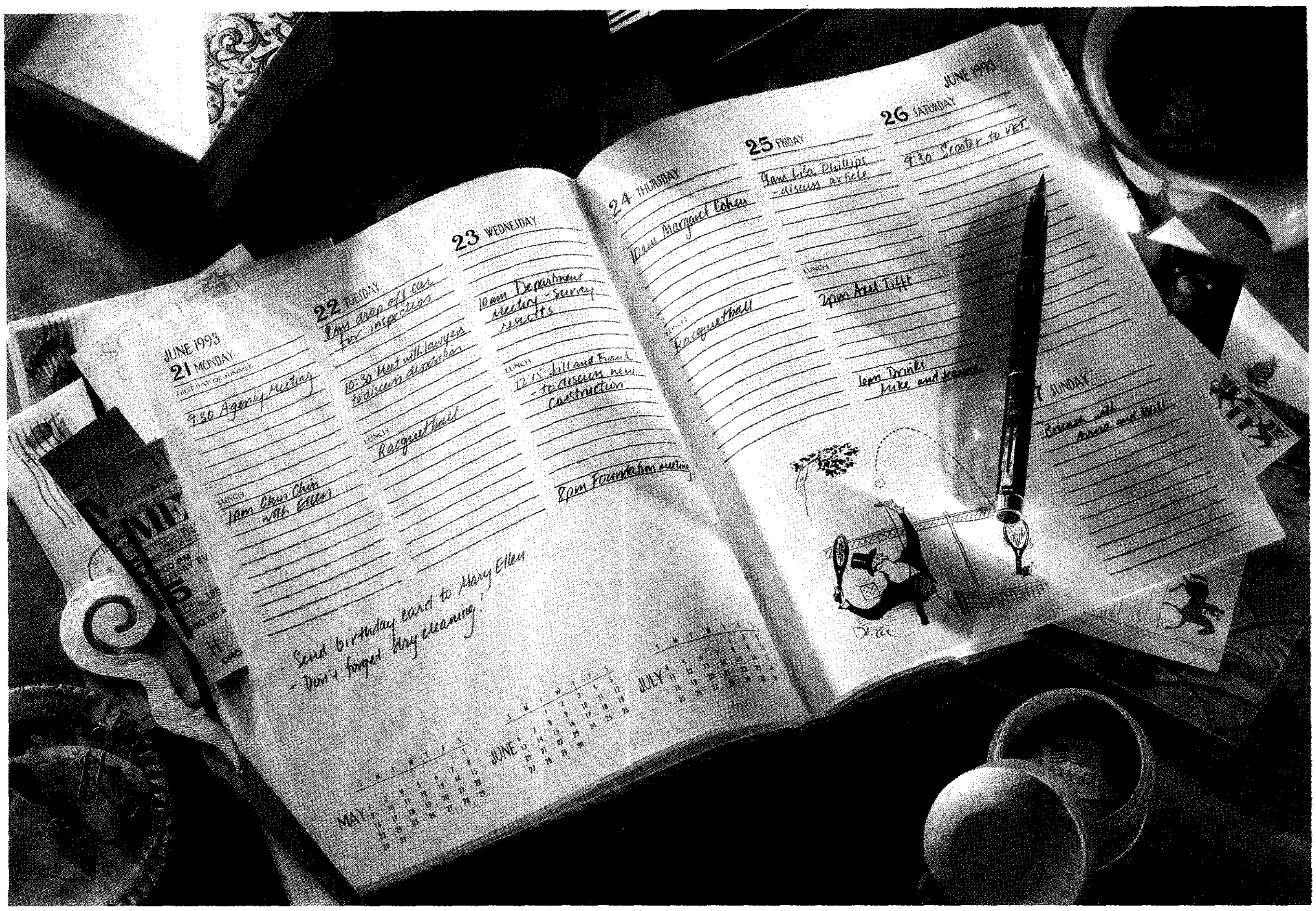
One of the guards said, "That's the man who invented the intermittent windshield wiper."

The family walked down West Lafayette Street. In the elevator, on the way up to Kearns' office, on the fourteenth floor, no one spoke. Kearns stared at the ceiling. "I just don't understand it," he said finally, to no one in particular. "I just don't understand why they didn't hold for willfulness."

The family spilled out onto the fourteenth floor. The former tenants had recently left, taking even the wall-to-wall carpeting with them, so we walked over slabs of epoxy-encrusted concrete. The view from the windows was of downtown Detroit—empty hotels and department stores, abandoned machine shops. In an unused room sat a disembodied windshield-and-dashboard assembly from a 1965 Dodge Dart, with a windshield-wiper system rigged up to it, which Kearns had used in the trial.

The family went into the Kearns offices. It was only ten-thirty—too early to go out to lunch. Phyllis suggested that she make some coffee. Her ex-husband seemed to be slipping away into one of his hopeless moods. "The moral is that unlawful conduct does pay," he said. "I don't see how any of us could go home to our children and say it does not." He sat at his desk. He looked like a man outdoors in very cold weather who was concentrating hard on staying warm. ♦

# START EACH DAY WITH A SMILE


JUNE 1993
21 MONDAY
9:30 Agency Meeting
22 TUESDAY
8am drop off car for inspection
10:30 Meet with lawyers to discuss deposition
Racquetball
1pm Chin Chin with Ellen
23 WEDNESDAY
10am Department meeting - survey results
12:15 Lillard Frank - to discuss new construction
8pm Foundation meeting
Send birthday card to Mary Ellen
- Don't forget dry cleaning
24 THURSDAY
10am Margaret Cohen
Racquetball
25 FRIDAY
10am Lisa Phillips - discuss article
26 SATURDAY
9:30 Scooter to vet
27 SUNDAY
Brunch with Anne and Will
MAY
JUNE
JULY

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## A REPORTER AT LARGE

# A LOST CHILDHOOD

*How much damage can a family withstand? Part 1 of a study of three generations examines the consequences of a mother's homelessness and drug addiction and how her child and grandchild, confronting the city's worst realities, find themselves in foster care.*

*by Susan Sheehan*

Crystal Taylor woke up early on Sunday morning, October 7, 1984, went to the bathroom, and noticed she was bleeding lightly. She was expecting a baby, but it wasn't due until mid-December, so she lay back down on the bed she shared with her boyfriend, Daquan Jefferson, in his parents' apartment in a Bronx housing project. Daquan's mother, Dolores Jefferson, took a look at Crystal and said, "You're getting ready to have that baby." Mrs. Jefferson couldn't bear the sight of blood. She told Crystal she didn't want her to give birth "on the outside," and, as she was leaving for church, advised Crystal and Daquan to get dressed and go to the hospital. Crystal telephoned her own mother and asked her to meet them there.

Daquan and Crystal found a taxi near the Jeffersons' building. They rode for a block while Daquan negotiated the fare with the driver. "Four-fifty," the driver said. The customary fare to Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center was two-fifty—the amount Daquan was willing to spend. Crystal figured that the driver was asking for extra money because of her condition ("They be taking a risk that the velvet-type material they got on they seats be stained," she said later), and told Daquan, "Pay the money, pay the money." But Daquan said to the driver "Why you be charging me so much?" and then, to her, "Come on, Crystal, I ain't letting him rob me. We got to walk and catch us another cab."

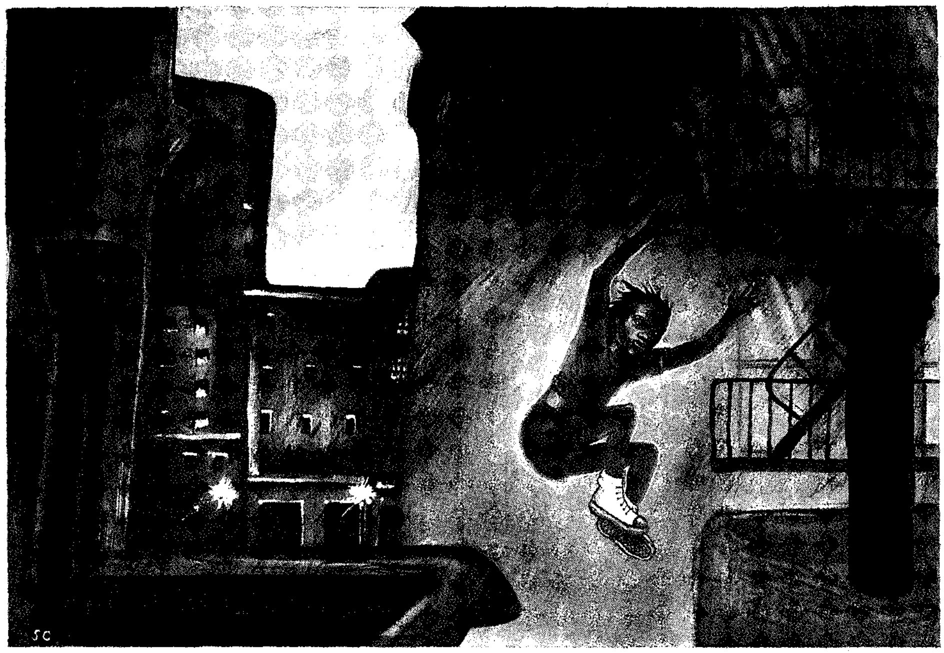
No cabs were cruising on Webster Avenue, where they got out. As they walked, Crystal kept getting contractions, and thought, I could have a baby right on a corner and this nigger beefing for two dollars. "I wanted to take him by his bony neck and strangle him," she said afterward, "but I was paining too much to be fighting." They walked about two blocks. The driver of a second taxi quoted them a fare of two dollars, and they got in. Crystal recalls that the driver drove fast and ran red lights like crazy, and that Daquan didn't even give him a tip. ("That cheap miser saved hisself fifty cents.") Her mother was waiting for her at the hospital. Florence Drummond, Crystal's mother, was on welfare. Crystal was covered by Florence's Medicaid. Crystal had been to Bronx-Lebanon once or twice for prenatal care, and was admitted as Crystal Drummond, although normally she used Taylor, her father's surname. (All the names in this account have been changed, and identifying details have been altered.)

Crystal's mother was a heroin and cocaine addict, whose helter-skelter life her daughter often held in contempt. On that Sunday, Florence Drummond looked as if she needed a fix, but Crystal was glad to see her: Crystal, fourteen, was Florence's oldest child, and the two had usually been close. She had her mother accompany her to a labor room, and told Daquan to wait outside, because he was getting on her nerves. Each time she had a contraction, Florence told her to squeeze her hand when it hurt. The medication she was given to inhibit the contractions had no effect. Crystal was wheeled into the delivery room. Florence held her head and told her to push. The second time Crystal pushed, Florence told her to look at the mirror on the ceiling and watch her baby as it emerged. The baby—a boy—was two months premature and had a heart murmur and slight difficulty breathing. He weighed three pounds six ounces. He was put in an incubator in the neonatal-intensive-care unit. Crystal was wheeled into a room for four.

In midafternoon, Florence went to the waiting room, where Daquan was sleeping on three chairs, shook him awake, and congratulated him on the birth of his first child. After being taken to see his tiny son, Daquan, Jr., the father, a short, dark man of twenty-three, called his own mother and ran home, still wearing a yellow hospital gown.

It had never occurred to Crystal that little Daquan—let alone Crystal herself—might end up in New York City's foster-care system. She had every intention of returning to the Jeffersons' apartment after her son's birth. If little Daquan hadn't been premature, she and Daquan would already have bought a portable crib, baby clothes, and blankets—"all that nice stuff for babies." In part because of her youth (it was hospital policy to interview all mothers below the age of eighteen), and in part because of her son's condition (he was considered a high-risk baby), a hospital social worker came to her room on Monday, October 8th. She asked Crystal if she would be returning to her mother's residence, at 1311 Findlay Avenue—the address from which Crystal had been admitted, and the one recorded on her son's birth certificate. When Crystal told the social worker that her mother was a substance abuser, who didn't have an apartment of her own, and that she had been living with her baby's father and his family, the social worker called the Office of Special Services for Children, a section of New York City's Human Resources Administration. S.S.C. assigned her and the baby a caseworker to investigate the situation.

After listening to Crystal, the caseworker ("He was a handsome black man," Crystal recalled later) informed her that she and her son couldn't return to the Jeffersons'. Crystal said she had readily consented to sexual relations with Daquan and regarded the Jeffersons as family. She called Florence "Mommy" and Dolores Jefferson "Ma." The caseworker said that he believed her but that his beliefs weren't relevant to her predicament. He explained that legally Crystal was still a child and therefore was too young to consent to sex. Daquan was technically guilty of statutory rape, and might be prosecuted; his much greater age would look bad to a judge. S.S.C. was apt to take the position that Crystal had somehow been coerced into living with Daquan and his family and that she and the baby could not be allowed to live with them. In the eyes of the authorities at the time, paternal grandparents were not the equal of maternal grandparents: the baby's father's family had no legal responsibility for Crystal or her infant. S.S.C. *would* discharge Crystal and little Daquan to her mother if Florence proved to be a suitable woman living in a suitable place.



SUE COE

The hospital put in a request for a visiting nurse to evaluate the apartment at 1311 Findlay Avenue. It was a filthy, overcrowded, underheated one-bedroom apartment rented by Florence's cousin Hazel, who shared it with her daughter, her latest man, and with Florence and the four children to whom Florence had given birth after Crystal. Hazel was also a substance abuser. Small-time drug dealers were in and out of the apartment storing and rebagging dope. Florence's youngest child, a boy born in February of 1984, at Bronx-Lebanon, had been a full-term baby, and Florence was in her thirties, so the hospital hadn't looked into her living arrangements then. Under the circumstances, S.S.C. would not permit a fourteen-year-old child and that child's child to live in such conditions. Squalor hadn't appealed to Crystal, either ("so many people sleeping in one room where everyone used to come trampeding"), nor had Hazel's two-facedness ("She smiled up in Mommy's face but when she was asleep or out she talked against her and hit up on my brothers like she did on her daughter"). Crystal had therefore packed some of her clothes in a plastic bag and had moved to the Jeffersons' a year earlier. She had returned to Findlay Avenue periodically. When Crystal was five months pregnant, Florence had called her to report that Hazel's daughter and one of her friends were wearing some clothes Crystal had left behind, and that Hazel had threatened Florence about meddling. Crystal had gone back and hit Hazel over the head with a rotten two-by-four to protect her mother. ("She ain't really got injured," Crystal recalls.)

Little Daquan would have to remain at Bronx-Lebanon until he weighed five pounds and was in good medical condition. Crystal was resilient and felt fine. Florence visited her every day and brought her marijuana. "She was bored," Florence says. "She had nothing further to do. Smoking weed made Crystal pleasantly high." Bronx-Lebanon needed Crystal's bed. She was discharged from the hospital on October 11th, four days after her admission, and was taken in a cab by the S.S.C. caseworker to the Queensboro Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which operated a diagnostic center where children in crisis were brought for evaluation. The caseworker said he would try to help Florence find an apartment. Until then, he would have to put Crystal in temporary care, and Queensboro had a bed available. Crystal cried on the way there and cried herself to sleep that night. As far as she was concerned, the diagnostic center, situated in a part of the borough of Queens given over to one- and two-family houses with front and back yards, was in the country. "I wasn't used to dirt ground or little buildings and trees," she recalls. "I was used to the city—to Harlem and the South Bronx—and to concrete and projects and high rises and stores within walking distance."

Crystal had arrived at Queensboro on a Thursday and wasn't permitted to leave the premises the first weekend. For two days, she refused to eat and kept crying. "The staffs told me to make friends with the other kids, but I was homesick," she says. "I didn't want to make friends with no strangers, I didn't want to eat they food, I didn't want to do *nothing*. I told them I had always gone to bed willingly with Daquan and I would go to bed with him willingly today. I thought my life that was just started was being ended. One nice lady staff said things wasn't as bad as they seemed, that my mother would get herself together and I'd go live with her, but for now I had to live there and they were just trying to help me. She knew that when you get hungry enough you eat. That's what happened. When I came to Queensboro, I was still wearing my maternity clothes. I was soon having two plates of everything. They used no seasoning when they cooked, but I put lots of salt and pepper on my food. That stuff was good. It took me a while to get rid of my stomach and fit into my jeans."

It took Crystal less time to make friends with the other girls there—girls lived on the center's second floor—and with the boys, who roomed on the third floor and, when an alarm on the fire escape in between was set, shimmied

down to the second on knotted sheets to smoke reefer and touch the girls until a counsellor caught them. "After I got to know that place, I had fun," Crystal says.

On subsequent weekends, Crystal was allowed to go to the Bronx, purportedly to stay with her cousin Hazel. She stayed with the Jeffersons. She saw her mother outside on Findlay Avenue and went to visit her son at Bronx-Lebanon every weekend.

CRYSTAL had started drinking cheap wine and using drugs before she entered her teens, when she lived on Sheridan Avenue, in a sixth-floor walkup. Her mother had often kept her out of school to babysit two of the younger children. Crystal resented being cooped up in a hot apartment while her friends were outside playing. As a child, she liked going to school ("School was the only time I had some freedom, I could run and play"). She passed every grade through sixth despite her absences and the very scant help that Florence gave her with her homework. "I could only ask Mommy once how to do the times table," Crystal says. "If I didn't get it and asked again, she'd beat me. If I said 'Mommy, I *don't think it's fair*,' I got hit again. I could never express my feelings without getting a beating." Sometimes Crystal was hit for what she considered just cause—her two younger brothers ate slowly, and if she was hungry she took food off their plates—but usually not.

Florence frequently left the house at 9 A.M., saying to Crystal, "I'm going to the welfare, watch the kids, I'll be right back," and returned at 11 P.M. "I had to feed and change my brothers," Crystal says. "It was as if they were my kids. Mommy cooked a big dinner on Sunday to last two days. If I hadn't watched her cook, we'd have eaten cold foods as the week went by. I seen her wash the rice and clean the chicken and if we had chicken in the refrigerator I'd fix it for me and my brothers and leave her a plateful. Or I'd make franks and frozen French fries. We got food stamps and Mommy bought groceries with them. But we had no grownups."

When Florence was out of money, she would send Crystal to borrow food from an elderly woman who lived alone next door. The neighbor would give Crystal the two pieces of bread or the eggs she asked for, in a friendly way, but when Crystal sat outside, on a fire escape the two apartments shared, she would hear the neighbor saying to herself, "God damn it, why don't they get they own bread?" Gradually, Crystal only pretended to seek food, simulating footsteps by tapping her feet in the hall, and letting time pass until she could return to report that the neighbor had no bread. Crystal escaped the troubles of her house in various ways. She jumped from the roof of her building to the roof of the building next door and went down a flight of stairs to visit friends who lived on the fifth floor. She looked out her living-room window at the George Washington Bridge, admiring the color orange as the sun went down and night fell, and fantasized about being on a tropical island. She locked herself in the bathroom and looked at herself in the mirror. She played with her "doll babies" and a doll house she and Florence had made out of a box.

Crystal's worst single memory of her childhood is of a time when her father, Wesley Taylor, overdosed on heroin and almost died. Her parents and their friends were often in the kitchen; the children were told to stay in their room when the grownups were getting high. One evening when Crystal was about ten years old, she heard her mother screaming "Wesley! Wesley! Wesley!" She came out into the hall. Wesley was foaming at the mouth, and Florence was stuffing ice down his throat and into his pants. There were needles and bloody tissues on the kitchen table. That evening, no one else was there. Florence told Crystal to go to the building next door to get a friend. Crystal obeyed, all the while crying, "I want my daddy, I want my daddy." She remembers telling the man she was sent to summon that her father was dead and to come quick. The man tried to lift Wesley and make him walk but hadn't succeeded by the time an ambulance came. "Promise me you won't do it no more," Crystal said to her father after he returned from the hospital. "Baby girl, I ain't going to do that no more. That was a close one for me," he told her. The next night, after Wesley left to visit his mother, Felicia Taylor, Florence used up the rest of the heroin.

"I started growing hatred," Crystal says. "My father almost died and here she used that stuff and was so out of it. I thought, How stupid can you be? I was scared—I didn't know what to do if she overdosed. I said 'Mommy, you O.K.?' and she said 'I'm O.K., you go to your room.' ”

When Crystal was twelve, she ran away from home for the first time, and during the seventh grade she started having trouble in school.

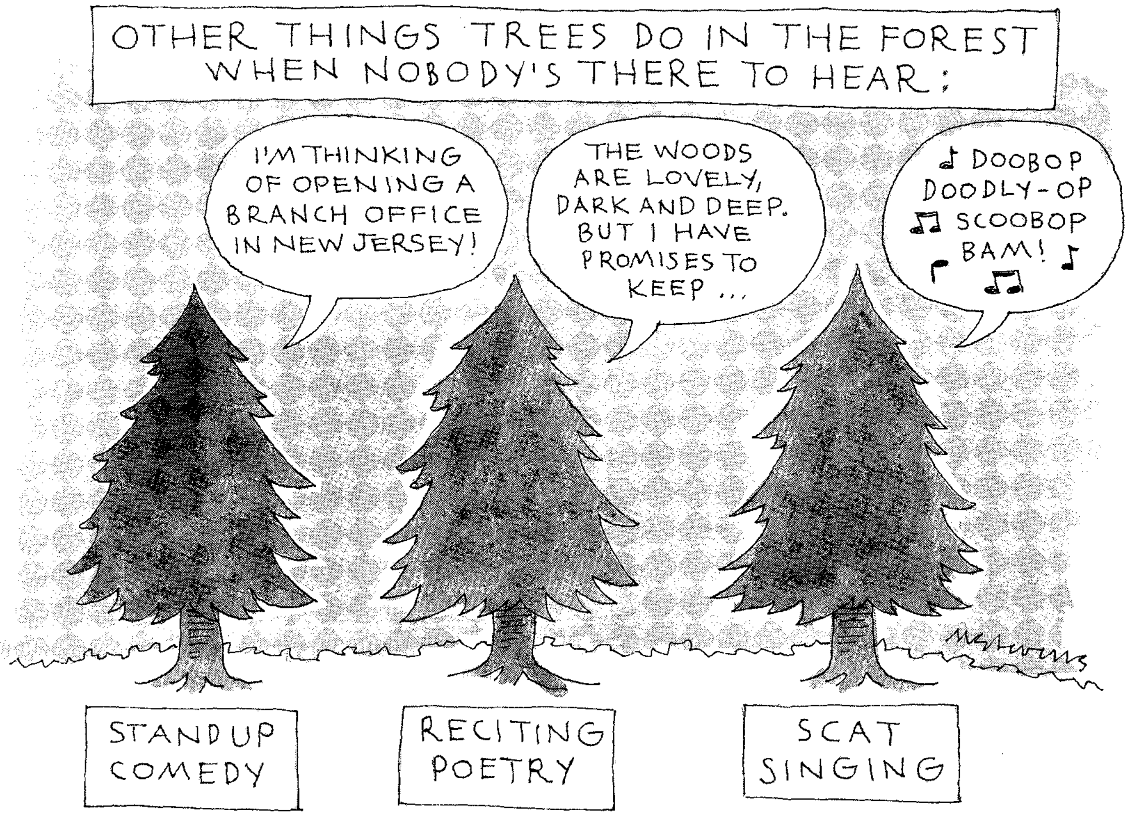
“I had this seventh-grade teacher, Mr. Reynolds, who had a bald spot,” she says. “I came in drunk one morning. He was writing on the blackboard, and everyone was copying stuff off of it. I got up. He told me to sit down. The sun was shining on the bald spot. I went to slap the shine off of his head. I tapped him teasingly on the center of his bald spot, calling out 'Fiddle-diddle, no hair in the middle!' He chased me around the room with a pointer. I hopped over the chairs and rolled over the desks. I slapped the paperwork off of his desk, while he shouted 'You come back here!' and 'You get out of my classroom!' I was rolling on the floor trying to get away from him and the pointer and toward the exit. I leaves. In the hall, I seen the principal coming and ran the other way, to the girls' bathroom. They suspended me for two days. They made me shake Mr. Reynolds' hand and promise I'd never do that again. I managed to keep a straight face.” Crystal played hooky, didn't do any homework, and didn't pass a single course that year. In the spring, she took a city-wide reading test for seventh graders: she read above grade level and was promoted.

One morning before going to the eighth grade, at Community Intermediate School 147, she smoked a bag of angel dust—phencyclidine, or PCP—that she had put in Hazel's freezer the previous night to keep it fresh. When she arrived at school, she attacked her eighth-grade teacher, Mrs. Sprigg, after Mrs. Sprigg asked her a question. Crystal remembers that an assistant principal and others (“ambulance people, maybe, and cops”) held her down. The next thing she remembers is waking up in Lincoln Hospital, strapped to a bed. Daquan came to the hospital with one of his brothers and two cousins, bought her a container of milk (“Milk brings the dust down,” Crystal says), and took her home to her mother that evening.

Crystal was still so out of it that she didn't recognize Florence. Florence, for her part, didn't believe that her daughter had been in the hospital; she thought Crystal had been with Daquan, about whom she had mixed feelings. When Crystal first met Daquan, he was a drug dealer. He gave Florence drugs, because she seemed to expect them as her due. Crystal grew weary of her mother's freeloading and told Daquan he didn't have to get Florence high in order to date her. After Daquan stopped giving Florence drugs, her attitude toward him seemed to change. Upon becoming pregnant, Crystal persuaded Daquan to give up dealing in drugs, by swearing that he would never see his son if he went to jail. In September of 1984, Daquan Jefferson went on welfare, and was put to work as a custodian for the New York City Board of Education. When a permanent position opened up, he got off welfare; he has held the job ever since.

After attacking Mrs. Sprigg, Crystal gave up smoking dust. She had already given up sniffing cocaine (it had caused her to black out) and dissolving “mestabs,” a pill form of mescaline, on her tongue, because “I suffers from asthma and they gave me dizzy spells.” She never tried heroin (“not after seeing what it did to Mommy”), did speed, or shot cocaine (“I'm scared of needles”). Until relatively recently, she sprinkled cocaine into cigarettes and enjoyed smoking “coolies.” To this day, she loves smoking marijuana, particularly in the evening and on weekends. It relaxes her, gives her a good appetite, helps her go to sleep, and makes it easier for her to have sex with the men in her life with whom she doesn't enjoy having sex.

Crystal was in the first half of eighth grade when she left Hazel's apartment. Daquan encouraged her to continue attending C.I.S. 147, which was near both Findlay Avenue and the Jeffersons' apartment. She set off for school most mornings, but she usually took the money that Daquan gave her every day for food and sundries for herself and her friends, used it to buy marijuana, met her friends in a school bathroom, and left with them for a White Castle restaurant, where she treated them to burgers. She skipped school after lunch. In eighth grade, she was very often high or absent, or both, and was well known


OTHER THINGS TREES DO IN THE FOREST WHEN NOBODY'S THERE TO HEAR:
I'M THINKING OF OPENING A BRANCH OFFICE IN NEW JERSEY!
THE WOODS ARE LOVELY, DARK AND DEEP. BUT I HAVE PROMISES TO KEEP ...
DOOBOP DOODLY-OP SCOOBOP BAM!
STANDUP COMEDY
RECITING POETRY
SCAT SINGING

to C.I.S. 147's truant officer. She was held back at the end of eighth grade, in June, 1984; she thinks her reading level had "sunk" as a result of too much hanging out, and she doesn't recall being present for any reading tests. By then, of course, she was pregnant. That September, she began to repeat eighth grade at Bronx Regional High School, in a special program for pregnant teen-agers, which she liked. ("They served nutritious juices and everybody had a big stomach.") She had been there only a few weeks when Daquan was born. After the birth, she continued her eighth-grade studies at a special program in a Brooklyn school, to which residents of Queensboro were bused.

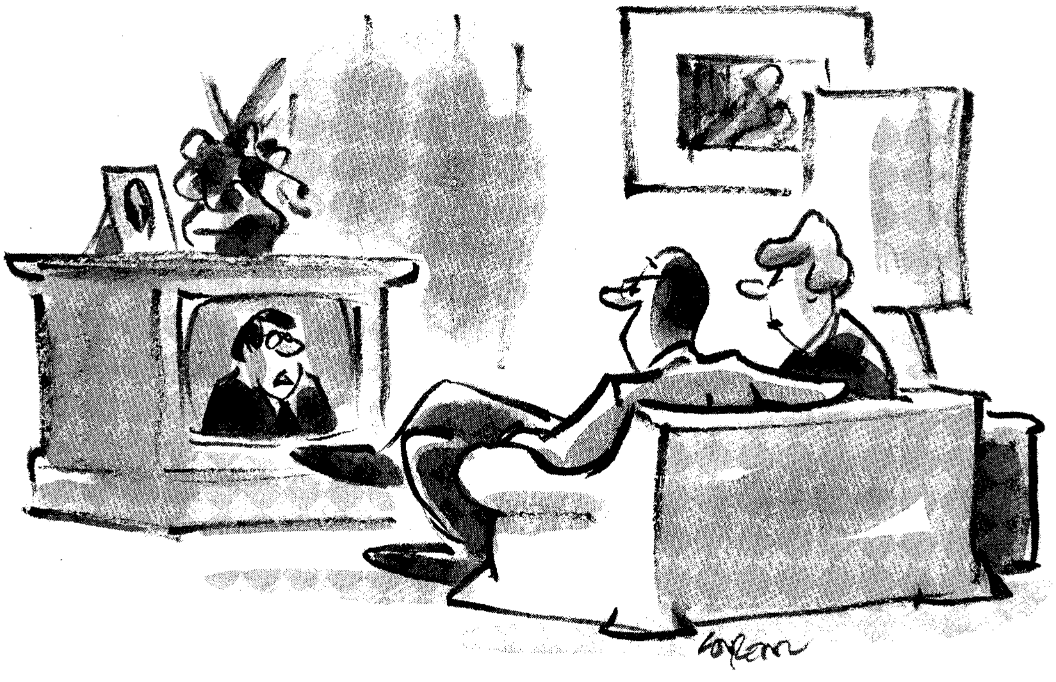
WHILE Crystal was at the diagnostic center, she was questioned, tested, and evaluated by a psychiatrist, a psychologist, and a social worker. The psychiatrist noted that "her attractiveness is somewhat marred by a chipped upper front tooth." An old wino had hung out on the ground floor of 1311 Findlay Avenue. People often beat up on him. One day, Crystal was running into the building to go to the bathroom in Hazel's third-floor apartment. He thought she was running toward him to hit him, and swung the bottle he had in his hands at her—a reflex action. The bottom of the bottle cracked both her upper front teeth, one of them badly. Crystal's mother did not take her to the dentist. Both her teeth were capped after she left Queensboro.

Crystal lacked enthusiasm for tests that involved shapes like triangles, circles, and squares. "You want me to put blocks in a box?" she asked. "This is for babies." Her "Performance I.Q. Score" was ninety, but there were "indications of potential for higher functioning." A "Psychosocial Report" stated the "presenting problem" succinctly: "Child has no place to go." Her interrogators found her pleasant but depressed over her situation, which did not change as October turned to November.

By December, little Daquan weighed seven pounds, required no medication, and was overdue for discharge from the hospital. Crystal engaged in some wishful thinking—that her mother would find an apartment, and that she and her siblings would be a family again. "Not that I would have been living with her, but I could then still be living with the Jeffersons and have my baby with me in his baskinet," she recalls. But Crystal had less reason than the nice lady staff member, who knew only partial truths, to think that her mother would get herself together in the near future. Florence wouldn't come out to Queens when Crystal's caseworker called her. She made two appointments but didn't show up, saying she had no carfare. "Mommy didn't even live with Hazel," Crystal says. "She spent her nights with Clarence, the father of her last baby, in a room he rented. Day in and day out, she skin-popped heroin like she been doing since I was a toddler. I had to face the reality that Mommy getting an apartment wasn't a reality."

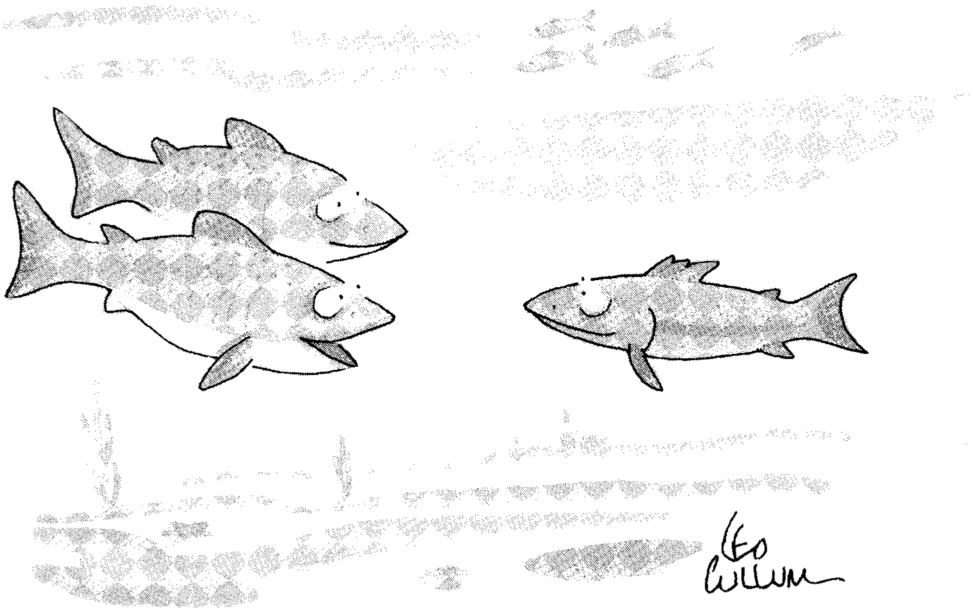
In mid-December, Crystal agreed to place her son voluntarily in foster care. She was crying when she signed the voluntary papers, but her S.S.C. caseworker had explained that if she didn't sign and the court took little Daquan and put him in foster care, she would have a harder time getting him back when she was older. In 1984, babies about to be placed in foster care in New York City went through an Allocations Unit. About ten per cent were sent to families that had been licensed by the city and were directly monitored by employees of the city's Human Resources Administration; the rest were sent to voluntary agencies that had foster-care contracts with the city. Voluntary agencies employed their own "intake" workers (who screened and accepted children), social workers, nurses, and other personnel; their paperwork was monitored by the city.

As it happened, the family that received Daquan Drummond was affiliated with St. Christopher's Home, a Catholic agency that had been founded in 1895, in Sea Cliff, on Long Island. For most of its early years, it had served as a country home for children convalescing from surgery until their parents could care for them, and had also taken care of orphans. A year after Daquan Drummond went to St. Christopher's, it merged with Ottilie Home, a Protestant agency that also dated back to the nineteenth century. Since the fall of 1985, the agency has been called St. Christopher-Ottilie by the outside world, but within the agency it is generally called St. Christopher's. The largest number of children the agency currently serves are those in its family-foster-home-care program. Twenty-three hundred children live for a few days, a few months, or a few years with eleven hundred families



*"And, finally, after a day of record trading on Wall Street, the entire world was owned by Mickey Mouse."*

of various faiths in Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island; some are adopted by their foster parents. In late December, St. Christopher's had no places available with black foster families in Brooklyn or Queens, so on December 20, 1984, Daquan Drummond went from Bronx-Lebanon to a black family on Long Island. Black children are occasionally placed with white families, and vice versa, but it is state practice and St. Christopher's to try to place children with foster parents of the same race. As for Crystal's prospects, Queensboro, where she was staying, was supposed to house youngsters for periods of up to ninety days while doing "workups" on them, and then, with the assistance of the city's Allocations Unit, to discharge them to the most appropriate setting—a parent or parents, other relatives, foster parents, or an institution of some kind.



*"What a vacation—we swam with dolphins!"*

On January 3, 1985, Crystal was one of three girls from Queensboro who went to a St. Christopher's office in Queens to be interviewed by the director of St. Christopher's city-based congregate-care facilities. In addition to its licensed foster-care families (technically known as foster boarding homes), St. Christopher's had four small "agency-operated boarding homes" (known in the vernacular as group homes) for girls and three for boys in Brooklyn and Queens, and also a number of larger facilities in Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island, for hard-to-place and mentally troubled children. There was one opening at a St. Christopher's group home in Queens Village. By the time Crystal returned to Queensboro, she was told that the place was hers. She was considered a good candidate for a St. Christopher's group home because she was perceived to have behaved herself at Queensboro. She had attended school every day of the week, no one had questioned what she did on weekends, she had not been caught smoking marijuana in the dorm, and she had a son in a St. Christopher's foster boarding home. Then, too, as Crystal sometimes says, "I is lovable."

The 1987 Encyclopedia of Social Work defines "foster care" as "full-time substitute care of children outside their own homes." The term includes care provided in foster homes, like the one for which little Daquan was bound, and various institutional and group settings as well, like the group home to which Crystal was going.

Before 1800, the most common form of foster care practiced in the United States was indenture, which derived from the old English Poor Laws: it provided for the forced apprenticing of dependent children until they reached the age of twenty-one. In their textbook "Child Welfare Services," Alfred Kadushin and Judith Martin argue that after the abolition of slavery, in 1865, "it was hard to justify an indenture that required the apprehension and return to a master of a runaway apprentice."

The origin of modern foster care dates back to 1853, with the founding of the New York Children's Aid Society, by Charles Loring Brace. It developed what was called a "placing-out system." In the mid-nineteenth century, the city was faced with the problem of how to deal with approximately ten thousand vagrant children—most of them the offspring of immigrants—who were roaming the streets. Brace believed that the best way to save the children was to send them to rural areas, where farm families could put them to work in an environment regarded as morally superior to the evil urban streets. Between 1854 and 1929, a hundred thousand children from New York and other Eastern cities were rounded up and dispatched by the trainload to "free foster-family homes" in the Midwest or the South. While the younger orphan-train children were often taken in for benevolent reasons, older ones were expected to earn their keep, and one critic of placing out remarked that it was "the wolf of the old indenture philosophy of child labor in the sheepskin disguise of a so-called good or Christian home." The demise of placing out resulted from protest by the Roman Catholic Church against the placing of children in Protestant homes (most city children were Catholics) and from opposition by people in Western states to the dumping of dependent children in their midst. The practice had also come under criticism from an increasing number of child-welfare professionals.

In the late nineteenth century, another alternative was devised for hapless children. Orphanages (which dated back at least to the fourth century but were revitalized in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) began to be perceived as temporary homes for poor children who had become wards of the state until they could be placed in foster-family homes. In the late eighteen-sixties, Massachusetts became the first state to pay foster families board money to maintain children who might otherwise have been placed in institutions. Nevertheless, according to Kadushin and Martin, controversy raged between the advocates of institutional care and the supporters of foster-family care over which type of care was the more desirable. The first White House Conference on Children, in 1909, concluded that "the carefully selected foster home is, for the normal child, the best substitute for the natural home." This clear preference for foster-family care notwithstanding, institutional care of one sort or another continued to be the more common form provided in America in the early decades of the twentieth century, accommodating fifty-three per cent of the nation's foster children as of 1933. A half century later, the proportion had declined to sixteen per cent. By 1990, many child-care authorities had come to perceive the two forms of care as complementary resources. The institutions, many of which originated as orphanages, now shelter children who not only cannot live with their own families but are too disturbed to live with foster families.

The number of children in foster care declined after the passage of the Social Security Act, in 1935, because its provisions allowed more children to be financially maintained at home. The numbers began to rise again in the nineteen-sixties and seventies, as families came apart, but then declined in the nineteen-eighties, as a consequence of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 and several other laws that attempted to control the number of children in foster care, often by helping troubled families stay together or by removing in a more timely manner children who had been placed in the system. In 1984, when little Daquan was placed in foster care, New York City's figure was 16,240, and the state's was 27,187. With the advent of crack cocaine and homelessness, the number of children in foster care took flight, and the problem also became an increasingly urban phenomenon. By 1989, there were 45,931 children in foster care in New York City and 58,540 in the state. By 1991, the numbers were 50,518 and 64,584, the latter showing New York State to have the second-highest population of foster children in the nation, after California.

In 1991, there were four hundred and thirty thousand children in foster care in the United States, at a cost of some six billion dollars, and, with more children being born each year into tenuous families or into circumstances where a child lacks even a single parent, the number seems certain to grow. In the last decade of the twentieth century, black, Native American, and Hispanic children are vastly overrepresented in foster care, and their stays tend to be longer than those of white children. Approximately eighty per cent of the children coming into care are estimated to have lived with a single parent, and an increasing number of babies entering care are suffering from severe physical disabilities, notably AIDS, drug addiction. An increasing number of the adolescents in care are displaying the emotional consequences of long-term placement and multiple placements—of being moved from foster family to foster family or from foster family to institution and back, without ever really having had a place to call home.

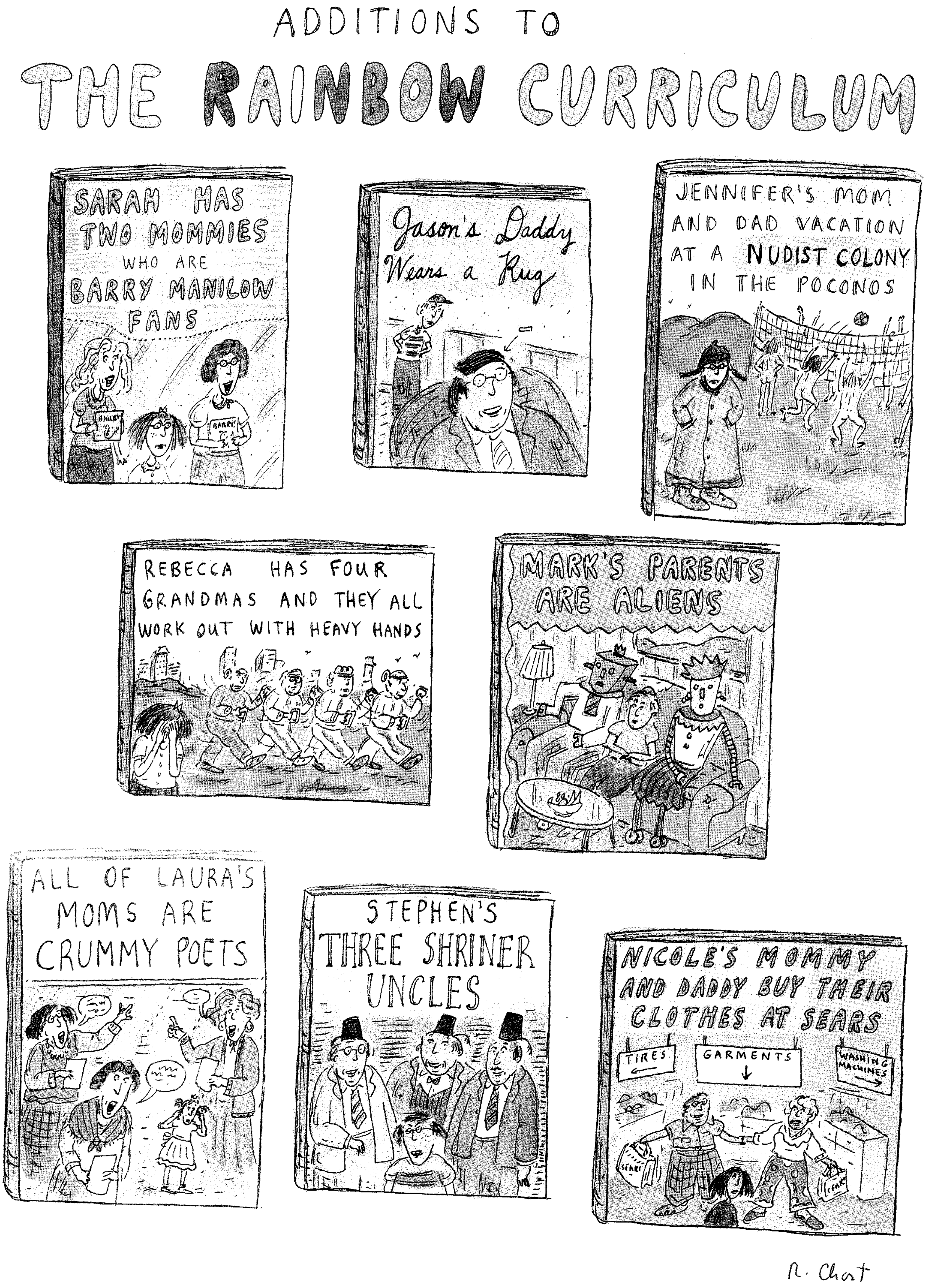
THE St. Christopher's group home to which Crystal Taylor was brought by some maintenance men from Queensboro on Friday, January 4, 1985, is a modest four-bedroom, two-story frame house at 223-07 107th Avenue, on a residential block in a lower-middle-class, predominantly black neighborhood. When the group home was opened, in 1981, St. Christopher's rented the house; subsequently the agency bought it. Like St. Christopher's other group homes for girls, it houses six residents at a time, who share three bedrooms. One child-care worker covers the house from Monday morning to Wednesday afternoon, a second from Wednesday afternoon to Saturday morning, a third from then until Monday morning. This arrangement, which requires two full-time workers and one part-time worker, each of them paid hourly rates during the day and evening and a flat rate for sleeping, is the least expensive way of maintaining round-the-clock coverage. The child-care worker on duty sleeps in the fourth bedroom, which doubles as an office.

The worker who welcomed Crystal to the house immediately began to explain its regulations. No men were permitted in the bedrooms, no alcohol or drugs anywhere. Each resident was responsible for keeping her half of the bedroom tidy, for doing her laundry (there was a washer and a dryer on the premises), and for doing a rotating list of chores—cleaning the living room/dining room, the bathrooms, the kitchen, and the storage-and-laundry-room area, and taking out the garbage. A resident was given carfare, an allowance, and an opportunity to earn an extra ten dollars when it came her turn to do one of the tough jobs, like defrosting the refrigerator or scouring the stove. There were curfews—9 P.M. on week nights, and midnight or 1 A.M. on weekends, depending on age and conduct. The residents were entitled to a limited number of outgoing local phone calls a day. They were required to attend an hour-long group meeting every Tuesday evening with a psychologist, and every second Tuesday each met individually with the psychologist for twenty or thirty minutes. At Queensboro, Crystal had been given a diagnosis of "Adjustment Disorder with Mixed Disturbance of Conduct and Emotions"—a catchall diagnosis given to most youngsters seen briefly in such settings. The social worker, with whom each resident had to meet twice a month, also came to the house on Tuesdays.

Crystal was introduced to her housemates—Lynn, Yolanda, Simone, Tina, and Nicole. The five, who were between sixteen and eighteen, had been told by a child-care worker that Crystal was "a goody-goody" and had been instructed, "Do not give her no reefer."

"Do you do reefer here?" Crystal asked shortly after her arrival. She soon had Yolanda and Simone high on the supply she had brought with her. On January 11th, her fifteenth birthday, a child-care worker arranged a party for her. The worker prepared a special dinner and served ice-cream cake. Lynn and Yolanda invited friends of their own, and Crystal invited Daquan and some of his male relatives. In a group home, the youngest often becomes a scapegoat, but Lynn, the group home's leader, took a liking to Crystal, and as a result no one tried to use her as a flunky.

Three of Crystal's housemates were black, one was Hispanic, and one was half black and half Chinese. Lynn had been in foster care since birth. She had never seen her mother—a drug addict,


ADDITIONS TO
THE RAINBOW CURRICULUM
SARAH HAS TWO MOMMIES WHO ARE BARRY MANILOW FANS
BARRY!
Jason's Daddy Wears a Rug
JENNIFER'S MOM AND DAD VACATION AT A NUDIST COLONY IN THE POCONOS
REBECCA HAS FOUR GRANDMAS AND THEY ALL WORK OUT WITH HEAVY HANDS
MARK'S PARENTS ARE ALIENS
ALL OF LAURA'S MOMS ARE CRUMMY POETS
STEPHEN'S THREE SHRINER UNCLES
NICOLE'S MOMMY AND DADDY BUY THEIR CLOTHES AT SEARS
TIRES
GARMENTS
WASHING MACHINES
SEARS
SEARS
R. Chast

who died when she was five—and had never known her father's surname. When she was fourteen, her foster father took her virginity, and she had been sent to the Holy Cross campus of an agency called Pius XII Youth & Family Services. Holy Cross is a residential treatment facility situated in Rhinecliff, New York; it has a school on its premises. Eighteen months later, the staff of Pius XII had decided that Lynn's behavior warranted putting her in a "less restrictive setting"—one in which she would attend public school in an urban community—and had referred her to St. Christopher's. Tina had also come to the 107th Avenue group home by way of foster care and Pius XII; Simone had come directly from a foster-care family. Yolanda and Nicole had come from home. Their mothers had felt unable to control their behavior and had petitioned Family Court for assistance; the court had deemed them "persons in need of supervision" (PINS), and they had been put in care. Before Crystal could enter the foster-care system, Florence either had to be charged with neglect—neglect can include letting a child of fourteen have a baby—or had to sign her into care voluntarily. Florence chose the latter. The specific reason stated for Crystal's placement was that her mother was homeless.

## BLACK COAT

I remember going out there,
The tide far out, the North Shore ice-wind
Cutting me back
To the quick of the blood—that outer-edge nostalgia,
The good feeling. My sole memory
Of my black overcoat. Padding the wet sandspit.
I was staring at the sea, I suppose.
Trying to feel thoroughly alone,
Simply myself, with sharp edges—
Me and the sea one big tabula rasa,
As if my returning footprints
Out of that scrim of gleam, that horizon-wide wipe,
Might be a whole new start.
My shoe-sole shapes
My only sign.
My minimal but satisfying discussion
With the sea.
Putting my remarks down, for the thin tongue
Of the sea to interpret. Inaudibly.
A therapy,
Instructions too complicated for me
At the moment, but stowed in my black box for later.
Like feeding a wild deer
With potato crisps
As you do in that snapshot where you exclaim
Back toward me and my camera.

The cost of keeping a resident in a St. Christopher's group home in 1985 was about seventy dollars a day, or $25,500 a year, with most of the money going for staff salaries and for either rent or mortgage payments on the house. Every effort was made to stretch the money as far as possible. Most of the child-care workers liked to cook, and prepared breakfast and dinner. (The residents qualified for free lunches at school.) Crystal, a self-described "picky eater," considered the food at 107th Avenue excellent and ample; there was always extra food in the refrigerator and on the pantry shelves.

The group home had a small activities fund: the residents were able to go to an occasional movie, roller rink, or amusement park. They also attended Mets games on tickets regularly donated to voluntary agencies. The staff lamented the low clothing allowance—twenty-five dollars a month, plus fifty dollars a year toward a winter coat—but was resourceful about making it go as far as possible and about using the petty-cash fund when a girl had a job interview and no pantyhose without runs. One woman used a connection in the Mayor's Voluntary Action Center, to which designers donated clothes, to obtain free name-brand sportswear. She also got someone to come to the group home to show the residents surplus models of the previous year's sneakers, which they could buy for twenty-five dollars a pair instead of seventy-five dollars. Birthdays and graduations were not in the budget, but St. Christopher's workers made certain they were celebrated, because they well knew that the lives of group-home kids were lacking in celebration. (The money sometimes came out of the workers' pockets.)

To remain in the group home, each resident was required to attend school and was encouraged to work part time during the school year and full time during the summer, the better to prepare her for post-group-home life. Crystal had continued in eighth grade during her stay at Queensboro. At St. Christopher's, she was enrolled in Queens Village J.H.S. 109, the nearest junior high school. She wanted to graduate in June, so she said she had completed the eighth grade, and went into the middle of the ninth grade in January. By the time her school record caught up with her, she was doing well enough so that she was not put back. She had some difficulty with history and, later, with punctuality, and often got drunk with a girl she met in the neighborhood, but she was able to graduate in June.

At her graduation, Crystal wore a blue silk dress, high heels, and a corsage provided by St. Christopher's. Her graduation was attended by Lynn and Yolanda, several members of the staff of St. Christopher's, little and big Daquan, and Margaret and David Hargrove, the couple from Long Island who had become little Daquan's foster parents, and their daughter, Alice.

It was in the fall of 1982 that the Hargroves had made up their minds to become foster parents. Mrs. Hargrove's sister was a St. Christopher's foster mother, and the Hargroves submit-

So I had no idea I had stepped
Into the telescopic sights
Of the paparazzo sniper
Nested in your brown iris.
Perhaps you had no idea, either,
So far off, half a mile maybe,
Looking toward me. Watching me
Pin the sea's edge down.
No idea
How that double image—
Your eye's inbuilt double exposure,
Which was the projection
Of your two-way heart's diplopic error—
The body of the ghost and me the blurred see-through
Came into single focus,
Sharp-edged, stark as a target,
Set up like a decoy
Against that freezing sea
From which your dead father had just crawled.

I did not feel
How, as your lenses tightened,
He slid into me.

—Ted Hughes

ted themselves to the agency's screening of prospective foster parents. They filled out a self-assessment form, provided copies of their marriage license and their latest income-tax return (in 1981, they had had a combined income of $38,627), agreed to permit the agency to make contact with their employers and to interview the people they furnished as references, and let an agency "homefinder" count and measure the bedrooms in their house—a five-bedroom Dutch Colonial in Mineola, which they had bought in 1964. The homefinder described it as "neat and well maintained inside and out" and "comfortably and appropriately decorated." They were interviewed at length. Mr. Hargrove, one of eleven children, was born in St. Croix in 1937, and Mrs. Hargrove, one of eight, in Antigua in 1942. Both had moved to New York City at early ages. He had graduated from high school; she had dropped out after tenth grade to work, and didn't "regret not having completed her schooling." They met on a basketball court in Queens in 1958, married a year later, and had two children. In 1982, their son was in the Coast Guard, and their daughter was attending college. The Hargroves' "motivation to foster children" was: "We both love children and we did so well with ours we would like to help others." Both of the Hargroves were in good health; they were Protestants but understood the state requirement that "foster parents respect the child's religion, even if different from their own"; they were willing to comply with the state and agency policy prohibiting physical punishment, and were prepared to "discipline foster children by grounding or depriving them of treats or privileges, or by talking to them." They said they understood that they were "responsible for taking a foster child to visit with his/her natural parents and siblings, as needed," and that "foster care is temporary, that the agency's goal is to reunite the family whenever possible." They had requested four children between the ages of seven and twelve who didn't have too many problems. Mr. Hargrove worked as a car salesman, a job he loved, and he expressed contentment with his life: "The only thing missing is having children in the house." Mrs. Hargrove had gone back to work once her children were in their teens. In 1982, she managed a diner from 8 A.M. to 4 P.M. and "didn't mind working but felt more fulfilled as a homemaker."

The homefinder noted that neither of the Hargroves had had an easy childhood. David Hargrove and some of his younger siblings had been under the care of their older sister, and she had yelled, punished, and hit to control them. Margaret Hargrove's mother had died when Margaret was six, and she had gone to live with an aunt, who was mean and emotionally mistreated her and her brother. The homefinder's impression was that the Hargroves would do best fostering a group of up to four siblings without severe problems, either boys or girls, ranging in age from seven to sixteen—children, essentially, in the category they had requested. "Acting out youngsters should be avoided," the homefinder wrote in a report, dated March 30, 1983. On July 1, 1983, a fifteen-year-old boy named Raymond Long and his sisters Regina, fourteen, Rosa, thirteen, and Rawanda, nine, were placed in the Hargrove home. After their mother's death in a fire, they had gone to live with their grandmother, but had proved too much for her.

In October, 1984, the agency had again called the Hargroves, to offer them two-month-old twins who needed foster care. Margaret Hargrove had by then realized that the Long children were more than she felt like handling, and she was pleased at the prospect of having infants in the house. St. Christopher's had originally certified the Hargroves for four children; it now certified them for six. The twins were taken from the Hargroves on December 7, 1984, when the court awarded custody to their maternal grandmother. "I was so upset that my mind wasn't on what I was doing and I broke the VCR," Mrs. Hargrove recalls. A few days later, St. Christopher's called again, with a two-month-old boy. Alice was home from college and answered the telephone. Mrs. Hargrove wasn't quite over the hurt of losing the twins, but Alice begged her to accept the baby, and she consented. When Crystal's S.S.C. worker brought little Daquan to the Hargroves' house, Alice opened the door. He handed the baby to her. "This is Daquan Drummond," he said. "This is for you."

For two months, Crystal Taylor considered having her son removed from the Hargroves' home. The initial visits to see her son were to take place at a St. Christopher's office on Long Island; Mrs. Hargrove cancelled the first two visits, one of them because her car would not start on a snowy day. Margaret Hargrove took a special liking to little Daquan, and was soon bringing him to the St. Christopher's office in Queens for visits with Crystal and big Daquan. They withdrew their request to move Daquan, because they felt "comfortable" with the Hargroves. Before long, Margaret Hargrove invited Crystal to spend weekends at her home. Daquan, Sr., would often come out on Saturday or Sunday, and sometimes he and Crystal went to the movies. Crystal's social worker was enthusiastic about the visits to the Hargroves. "When Crystal is with her son, she doesn't have time to get into negative things," she wrote in Crystal's record during the summer of 1985. Crystal, however, took pleasure in negative things—primarily in returning to the 107th Avenue group home "smashed." When Mrs. Hargrove said she was eager to have Crystal placed in her home, along with little Daquan, Crystal declined, telling her, "You is terrific for my son, but you is too strict for me."

CRYSTAL started tenth grade in the fall of 1985. Because the high school closest to the group home had a poor reputation and more than its fair share of violence, St. Christopher's was able to get Crystal accepted by Flushing High School as an out-of-zone student. Flushing High was well regarded academically and had a racially and ethnically diverse student body of about five hundred per grade. When Crystal's social worker escorted her to school the first day, Crystal expressed apprehension about attending Flushing until she spotted some boys she considered good-looking standing in front of the school building. "I think you're going to like this school after all," the social worker said.

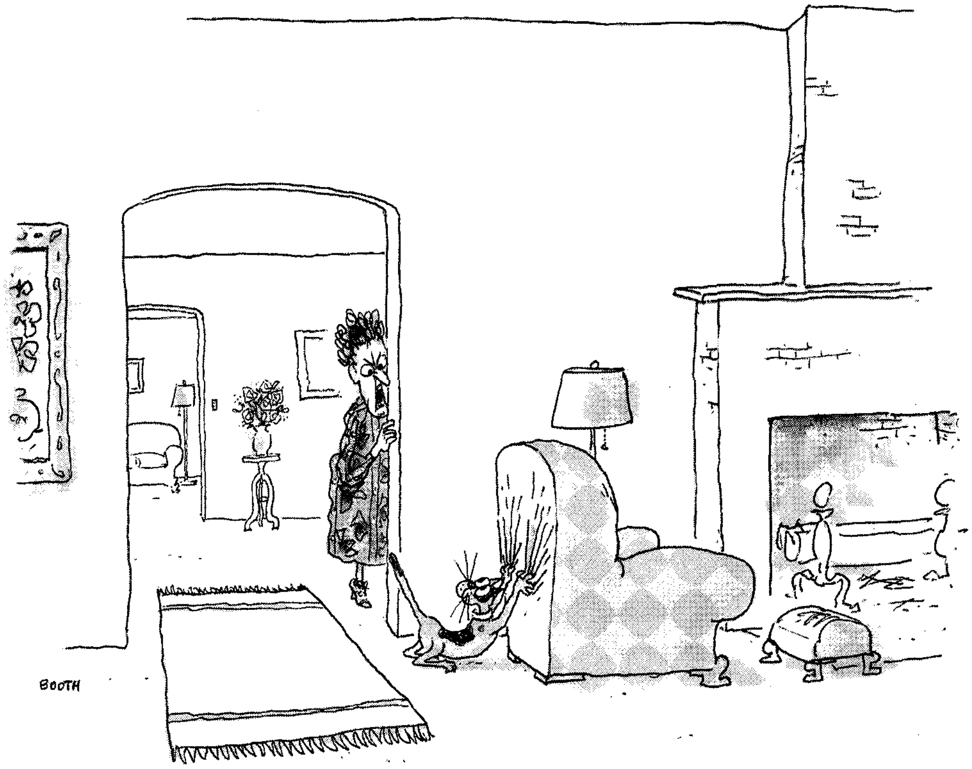
She didn't. It was a two-bus ride to the school, the courses were challenging, and her study habits were poor. On January 11, 1986, Crystal Taylor's sixteenth birthday (shortly before she was to flunk many of her first-semester courses at Flushing), Daquan Jefferson put an engagement ring on her finger. The ring had a round fraction-of-a-carat stone in the center of a yellow-gold band, and two smaller diamonds on each side. Crystal said later that she had accompanied Daquan to a pawnshop to select it, "so's it would be satisfactory and you could see it twinkle at least a little ways off without straining your eyes or needing no magnifying glass." The ring was a bargain: Daquan paid the pawnshop a hundred dollars for it.

Soon after her birthday-and-engagement, Crystal was arrested twice. The first time was for drugs. A New York State employment program for underachievers had helped Crystal obtain a part-time job as a cashier for a grocery store. There are many activities that Crystal prefers to working, but she had been frustrated in her efforts to find employment at fast-food shops when she was fifteen, and thought she should give work a try at sixteen. Crystal had a Trinidadian friend who regularly treated her to marijuana. She wanted some reefer to celebrate her new job and went to her friend's place of business, a reefer house in Jamaica, Queens. Her friend and his cousin were at the house. They gave her some weed from one of two big bags they had concealed under a kitchen floorboard, and returned it to its hiding place. She rolled a joint and took two puffs. Before she could take a third, two police officers broke in, pointing guns and shouting "Hands up on the wall!" and "Freeze!" A policewoman patted Crystal down—Crystal had already dropped the joint—while a policeman searched the two men. Nothing was found on any of them, so the police began looking under a couch, ripped up the couch, and knocked holes in the walls with their sticks. More policemen arrived and looked harder: they pulled up the kitchen floorboard, and discovered the hidden bags of marijuana. The police suspected Crystal of being the supplier; they had had the house under surveillance when she strolled in. Asked her age, Crystal said sixteen. "Well, well, well, you just made it to go through the system," the policewoman told her. (As a minor of fifteen, who had no marijuana in her possession, she would likely have been released.) She was taken to a precinct in Jamaica to be booked. She requested the one phone call to which she was legally entitled, and was told she could call after she had been photographed and fingerprinted. Once she was fingerprinted, she was told that she was sup-

*"Let me guess. You had it up to here with the world of business, so you packed it all in and started your own winery."*

posed to have used the phone prior to the fingerprinting, and was locked up for the night. She didn't appreciate being "suckered out" of her call. The police telephoned the group home. A child-care worker who had known Crystal since her first month at 107th Avenue drove over the following morning to take her home. She shook her head, and reminded Crystal that she had told her to stop smoking reefer countless times, and to stop hanging out with the wrong people in the wrong places. She said that she was sorry Crystal refused to use better judgment, that there could have been a shoot-out, and that, luckily, this would teach her a lesson.

Crystal went to court and refused to plead guilty. "I wasn't a carrier, I was one of the innocents," she says. "I just came to visit my friend, no harm in that, and they had no proof of wrongdoing on me." While the case was being adjourned—Crystal's Legal Aid lawyer wasn't always there to represent her—she was arrested again, for a different offense.



*"Is it any wonder you got coal in your stocking?"*

• •

CRYSTAL had continued to do poorly at Flushing High. Most days, she missed her first class. Some days, instead of going to school she and two friends from the group home travelled to Manhattan by bus and subway and went to the movies on Forty-second Street; the journey was only slightly longer than the one to school (she had complained about that journey to the group-home psychologist), and from Crystal's point of view there was more to look forward to when she reached her destination. The girls were careful not to return to the group home before the end of the school day plus an hour and a half. Crystal didn't do her homework, but once, when she was assigned by an English teacher to read a play of Shakespeare's ("That language was too much of a drag, there was too many complications," she says), she went to a movie theatre to see "Macbeth" instead. "I remember witches and a witch killed a man or a man killed a witch," she says. "It was O.K., but it was corny. It was nothing like as good as 'The Wizard of Oz.' " Crystal is unfamiliar with the names of most renowned poets—Keats, Emily Dickinson, and Countee Cullen, for example—but "one day at Flushing when I decided to play student out of the many days I cut" she was exposed to a Langston Hughes poem she admired and still half remembers: "Something about an old lady looking back and telling a little boy never to give up on hisself. She said something like 'Life for me ain't been no crystal stairs, it had many boards torn up.' Because her life was not laid out on a red carpet, it made her want to do more, to get more better. It was saying to the boy even if he have to live in an apartment with no electricity, only candles, don't give up, you can always find something good at the end. I understood that poem."

One day when Crystal had attended most of her tenth-grade classes, she and two friends, Tiffany and Stacey, went to Stern's, a department store near school, in the afternoon. Each teen-ager picked out several Liz Claiborne spring outfits. They had agreed to split up and meet outside the store. Stacey put her clothes in her book bag and was apprehended as she left the store. Crystal, at sixteen, was an experienced shoplifter. When she was five or six years old, Florence often took her to "fancy department stores," like Bloomingdale's, from which Florence stole clothes to sell for drugs: a child was something of a decoy to throw off security. If Crystal needed a coat, Florence would take one off a rack, pop the ticket, and put the coat on Crystal. Most of the time, Florence just concealed the clothes she selected to "boost," over a special girdle and under her coat. Crystal was frightened when Florence was caught, arrested, and taken away for shoplifting, but she was too young to understand what the arrest was about. (She had also been frightened when Florence was arrested for welfare fraud and for selling drugs.) At eight or nine, Crystal and a group of her friends frequently stole Silly Putty and other toys from a discount store in their Bronx neighborhood. At the group home, she stole from department stores. It wasn't because St. Christopher's clothing allowance was low, or because she couldn't afford what she wanted, that she stole. Daquan gave her money regularly. Clarence, the father of Florence's youngest son, gave her fifty dollars here and a hundred dollars there. (A child-care worker who knew her well was convinced that she earned that money by going to bed with him.) Crystal stole because she calculated, "Why buy when I can just take? I can get me a new outfit and still have money in my pocket."

That particular afternoon at Stern's, Crystal didn't feel comfortable. Stacey, from the room where she was being detained, overheard the store's security personnel observing Tiffany putting the outfits she wanted in her schoolbag. When Crystal hesitated, Tiffany handed her the schoolbag, took the clothes Crystal wanted, and put them in Crystal's schoolbag. As Tiffany walked out of the store, she got caught carrying Crystal's clothes. Crystal was caught carrying Tiffany's. The three girls were taken to a precinct in Flushing. After they were booked, they were released because none of them had ever been convicted of a crime. (Crystal's drug case was still pending.) Tiffany and Stacey called their parents, who drove to the station house to fetch them. Crystal took the Q-17 bus and the Q-2 bus back to the group home. The child-care worker on duty had already received a call from the police.

At the time, Crystal thought, Damn, those parents could have given me a ride, but, oh, well, anyway, life goes on. Once in a great while, she envied the few girls she had grown up with whose mothers didn't beat them; girls whose mothers gave them everything they wanted, including a steady supply of new clothes, and not just new clothes at the start of school, for Christmas, and for Easter, and hand-me-downs and stolen goods the rest of the year; girls who had never lived in an apartment lit by candles because the electricity had been turned off; girls whose mothers didn't embarrass them when they came to school, as Florence embarrassed her on the infrequent occasions when she was summoned, because her hands were puffy from skin-popping. (The other kids saw her hands and taunted Crystal, saying, "Your mother's a dope fiend.") And, as she grew older, she sometimes envied girls whose mothers were there for them—who had apartments, so that their daughters weren't put into foster care. Much of the time, Crystal simply acknowledged that her mother and her father, whom she hadn't seen in years, were drug addicts, who would never be the kind of family she hoped for, and, instead, looked on the bright side of group-home life.

Back at 107th Avenue, a child-care worker asked, in reference to her arrest, "Crystal, you doing it again?" and put her on a week's restriction—no use of the phone, no going out after school. Crystal handled the restriction in her fashion. She said she was going to school whether she did or didn't go, stayed out until 5 or 6 P.M., provided excuses for her tardiness (malfunctioning buses or subways, for instance), and made her phone calls before returning to the group home. "Stacey and Tiffany were probably getting preached at and punished," she says. "I knew the rules. No one at St. Christopher's could put a hand on me."

After the drug arrest, Crystal had been offered an opportunity to take advantage of the Queens District Attorney's Second Chance Program for selected first-time youthful offenders who had committed nonviolent crimes. She had maintained her innocence and had declined. But even Crystal, regarded as an expert at innocence and denial by the staff of St. Christopher's, could not deny her guilt on the shoplifting charge, so she now agreed to participate in Second Chance. Under the program, a guilty plea covered Crystal's two offenses; her criminal record would be wiped clean if she did a prescribed amount of community-service work and didn't get arrested while she was in the program or for six months afterward. If she did get arrested, she would have to face sentencing for both offenses.

Crystal was assigned to spend forty hours cleaning up Cunningham Park in Queens. She put in the hours in August of 1986, after flunking most of her courses at Flushing High. She was the only young person from Second Chance assigned to a Parks Department crew in Cunningham Park. The crew consisted of three husky men who were regular employees. Crystal, a petite, slender young woman, didn't tell them about the shoplifting charge—only about the marijuana bust, an offense to which she assumed they would be sympathetic. With a "paper-snatcher" she picked up papers left on the grass by picnickers, but she didn't care for emptying trash bins and putting new plastic bags in them. "The mens who drove the trucks could have made me work, but they were getting paid to do it, and they were nice and told me, 'Relax, relax, we got this. We'll meet you later at the basketball court,' so I worked an hour, then went off and slept and smoked a joint," she recalls. By then, Crystal was fed up with her job at the grocery store: the customers wanted their groceries packed a certain way; the fifteen-minute breaks were too short for consuming pizza. "That scene just wasn't me," she says.

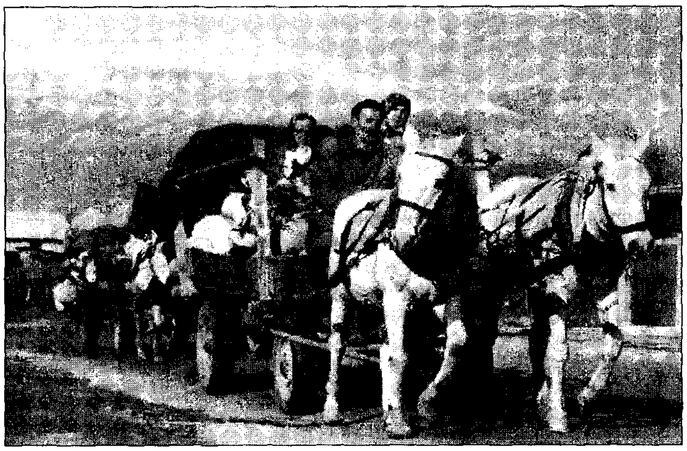
In September of 1987, about six months after Crystal's arrest record was wiped clean and three months after she failed to complete tenth grade at Flushing High School for the second straight year, Crystal and her friend Tonia, from the group home, went shopping for school clothes at a mall on Long Island. Crystal had plenty of money, and spent over a hundred and fifty dollars at Macy's on an acid-washed blouse, acid-washed jeans, two Guess denim skirts, and a pair of suède moccasins. She and Tonia saw some Bill Blass and Perry Ellis socks that cost between ten and twenty dollars a pair. She thought the socks were cute but overpriced ("Socks can catch holes after you wear them a couple of times"), so she and Tonia selected a number of pairs in assorted colors and put them in their Macy's shopping bags. They didn't think anyone would be watching the sock racks. In fact, store detectives had been watching them for a long time and stopped them. They produced receipts for their purchases but had none for the stolen socks. The store detectives notified the manager, who expressed his displeasure with young black shoplifters and called the police. The girls were handcuffed and were taken to jail for the night.

Crystal's first night in jail, after the drug arrest ("City jails are casual," she says), had not intimidated her. Only her belt and her sneaker laces ("things they think you'll commit suicide with") had been removed. This time, her bra, socks, shoes, jacket, and barrettes were taken away; she was left with nothing on but her panties, pants, and a short-sleeved shirt. She was locked in a cell furnished with a bench (but no pillow or blanket),

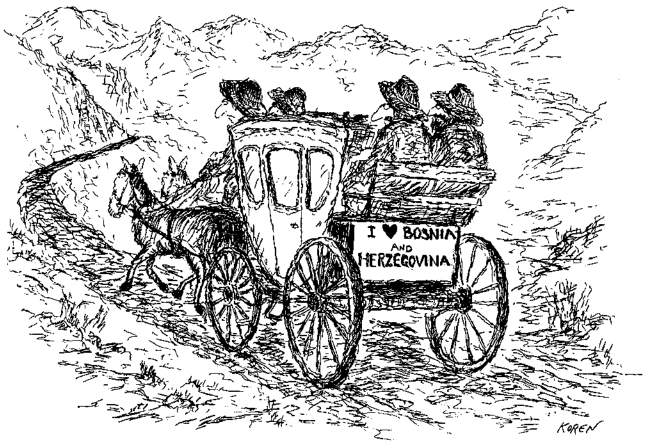
## CONVERGENCES

# LOVING OR LEAVING BOSNIA

*by Edward Koren*



The Economist, November 21, 1992



The New Yorker, July 27, 1981

THE other day, opening *The Economist,* I was startled by an image of Bosnian refugees that struck me with a force not so much of déjà vu as of déjà fait. The photograph reminded me of a drawing I had made back in 1981, in an attempt to address an altogether different and infinitely less dreadful issue.

In 1981, the thoroughfares of the United States were flooded with mobile hearts: bumper stickers that celebrated the motorist's love for cats, scuba diving, or Yorkshire terriers, or for some geographic locale—a home town or vacation spot. The phenomenon seemed at once naïve and a bit hopeless—another American effort to single yourself out, to differentiate yourself (and your car) from the hordes of apparently identical beings and things. At the same time, it seemed an attempt to reach out across the asphalt to signal your humanity (through what you ♥ed) to other souls, similarly atomized, and hurtling along in their own vehicles with their own hearts plastered across their chrome sleeves.

The cartoonist's problem: How to address all this? Where best to project a distillation of ourselves? I mulled over a number of likely candidates—Antarctica, the Arabian peninsula, the Midlands, New Jersey. But none had the possibilities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Historically fractious, physically rugged, economically marginal, the place seemed sleepily out of time—nestled in an earlier century within the confines of a modern nation. It seemed, in 1981, the perfect venue for a bit of American silliness—the most dormant place on earth. ♦

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a sink, and a toilet (but no toilet paper). The mild September day became a chilly September night. Crystal was shivering, but the woman corrections officer insisted on leaving the cellblock window open. Crystal kept requesting tissues—she pretended to have a bladder problem—and the officer gave her a few at a time. Although the officer could see Crystal's cell on a television monitor and knew what she was up to, she doled out tissues for a couple of hours. By then, Crystal had used the paper to wrap her cold feet. The officer finally gave her the tissue box with the remaining tissues. Crystal put the box under her head for elevation, put her cold arms inside her shirt for warmth, and nodded off at 4 A.M. At the end of the night there was cold coffee, "nasty hard eggs on a hard roll," and another child-care worker from St. Christopher's to drive her home. Back at 107th Avenue, Crystal took a shower, threw out the clothes she had worn in jail, and went to bed. "I would have burned the clothes if I could have," she says. "I felt nasty and dirty. I felt like a whole lot had been taken from me—my self-respect, my pride. Macy's dropped the charges—I guess they figured they had taught us a lesson. I never shoplifted since. My worst fear is having to sleep in jail again. I won't steal even an eyeliner. Now if I don't have the money I do without, much as I hates doing without."

Crystal still tries to avoid doing without. A while ago, she passed a Woolworth that was having a going-out-of-business half-price sale. She went in and bought a package of mascara—Maybelline Great Lash—and some other odds and ends, like soap and Kotex. When she got home, she emptied out the Woolworth bag with her purchases, and for a minute she didn't see the mascara. When she found it, she decided to return to Woolworth the following day with her receipt to ask for the mascara that the clerk, according to her, had failed to put in her bag. She went back to Woolworth with a girlfriend, sought out the manager, told her story, and was given a replacement mascara. "For a minute, I really thought I had been done out of my Maybelline, and by the time I found it I already got the idea in my head to ask for it and there was no turning back," she told her friend. "It beats putting it in my pocket and having it taken away, and I likes beating the system honestly." Crystal's friend, a sheltered girl, who is perennially astonished by Crystal's adventures and misadventures, asked her how she had the nerve to ask the manager to replace the unmissing mascara. Her eyes narrowed merrily, and her lips widened into a grin. “My name is Crystal,” she replied.

The longer Crystal remained at the group home, the less inclined she was to obey its regulations. Serving restriction for having shoplifted designer socks would have cost her too much face with Diamond Madison, a twenty-two-year-old drug dealer she had started dating a month earlier. Diamond Madison had plenty of money and was open-handed. “If he had found out, he would have said, ‘What I'm going to steal for, I had the money in my pocket,’ ” Crystal reminisces. “He kept me in line a lot.” Crystal is fickle, and most of her sexual relationships have been fleeting. Diamond is the man she has loved best so far.

By the time Crystal was four, she had been sodomized by one of her father's brothers. At twelve, she had been sexually abused by a Mr. Jones, the elderly superintendent of the last apartment Florence had in the Bronx before she was evicted for nonpayment of rent and moved in with her cousin Hazel. Mr. Jones knew that Crystal was confined to the house, taking care of her younger brothers, and that Florence beat up on her a lot, so Crystal would be grateful for a chance to get out. He told Florence that he had a sister in Harlem named Hattie who was in a wheelchair and that Crystal could clean her apartment on Sundays.

“When I got there, I saw his sister wasn't old and in a wheelchair—she was like any other old lady able to clean up her own house,” Crystal says. “He made me drink liquor, he made me smoke reefer, then he made me get in the bed with him and rubbed against me. He warned me about telling my mother. He said she wouldn't believe me.”

The second Sunday Crystal was taken to Harlem by Mr. Jones, she went to a store near Hattie's building. Two young men, Floyd and Keith, were on the street. Crystal was a new face in the neighborhood. When they asked who she was and she told them she was there with her uncle, Mr. Jones, they knew that she was the latest little girl Mr. Jones had lured to Hattie's apartment.

“You got to stop sleeping in the bed with that old man,” Crystal remembers their saying. “After eating the hamburger and French fries they bought me, I did more drinking and smoked reefer with them. Then they took me to an abandoned apartment in Hattie's building, only it was higher up. Floyd raped me while Keith watched. He then apologized, saying, ‘You looked so good I couldn't help myself.’ He didn't touch me again.”

Floyd and Keith fed, housed, and clothed Crystal for almost two weeks, first at Floyd's girlfriend's house and afterward at a hotel. Crystal was content: she had no desire to return to her mother's building to see Mr. Jones, to do more babysitting, to absorb more beatings. Mr. Jones told Florence that Crystal had gone to the store and never come back. Florence thought that someone had kidnapped Crystal. She had separated from Crystal's father, Wesley Taylor, two years earlier, but he lived in the vicinity of Hattie's apartment. She got in touch with him, and he went out looking for her. Floyd and Keith, who were a pair of robbers, got wind of the search and turned Crystal over to a police precinct in Harlem. She was questioned, and was examined by a doctor. Mr. Jones was brought into the precinct. He denied her accusations. She was driven home in a police car. “When I got there, Mr. Jones was outside the building,” she says. “He went downstairs to the basement apartment, where he lived with his wife. I went upstairs. My mother believed me in a way.”

Crystal was thirteen when she met Daquan, on Findlay Avenue. On their first date, they went to the movies, had their pictures taken by a photographer outside the theatre, and went to a hotel elsewhere in the Bronx where Daquan paid for a so-called short-stay room, one they were entitled to occupy for three hours. They both smoked dust. Crystal told Daquan she was hungry—she wasn't eager to go to bed with him. He went out, and returned with “some nasty chicken.” While Daquan was taking off his clothes, Crystal saw forty dollars on the floor and pocketed it. “After we had sex and done all of that, I asked Daquan for some money to buy jeans with,” she recalls. “I really thought that money had been left in the hotel room by some previous person until Daquan asked me if I seen his money. I had the nerve to get down and pretend to help him look for it underneath the bed and the rug. When he realized he wasn't going to find it, we left. I told him afterwards, when we was living together, ‘I robbed you. How do you think I got that extra pair of jeans?’ He told me he had a feeling I took the money but he didn't want to accuse me so he ain't said nothing.”

Crystal says, “I really loved Daquan, but while I was living with him I got away with having sex with another guy, Derrick, at Derrick's place. Then there was this Puerto Rican. I couldn't resist his soft lips. I had him call me at the Jeffersons'—I told him I was living with my grandmother and had an overprotective uncle but I'd be moving out soon. I went to the movies to see ‘Splash’ with him. Daquan caught me when he brought me home, and hit me, so I never had sex with the Puerto Rican. I was two months pregnant by then.”

When Crystal realized that she was pregnant, she made plans to go to a hospital clinic to verify her condition and quietly obtain an abortion. She set off for the clinic after telling Daquan she was meeting a friend before going to school. He followed her to the hospital and, unbeknownst to her, into the clinic. As the nurse's aide gave her the test results, Daquan cried out “Yes, yes, yes!” and hugged her. Crystal, who was thinking, No, no, no, felt frustrated. She cried. “My scheme had been blown.” Mrs. Jefferson agreed with her son. “You don't be needing no abortion,” she said. “Them things are dangerous.”

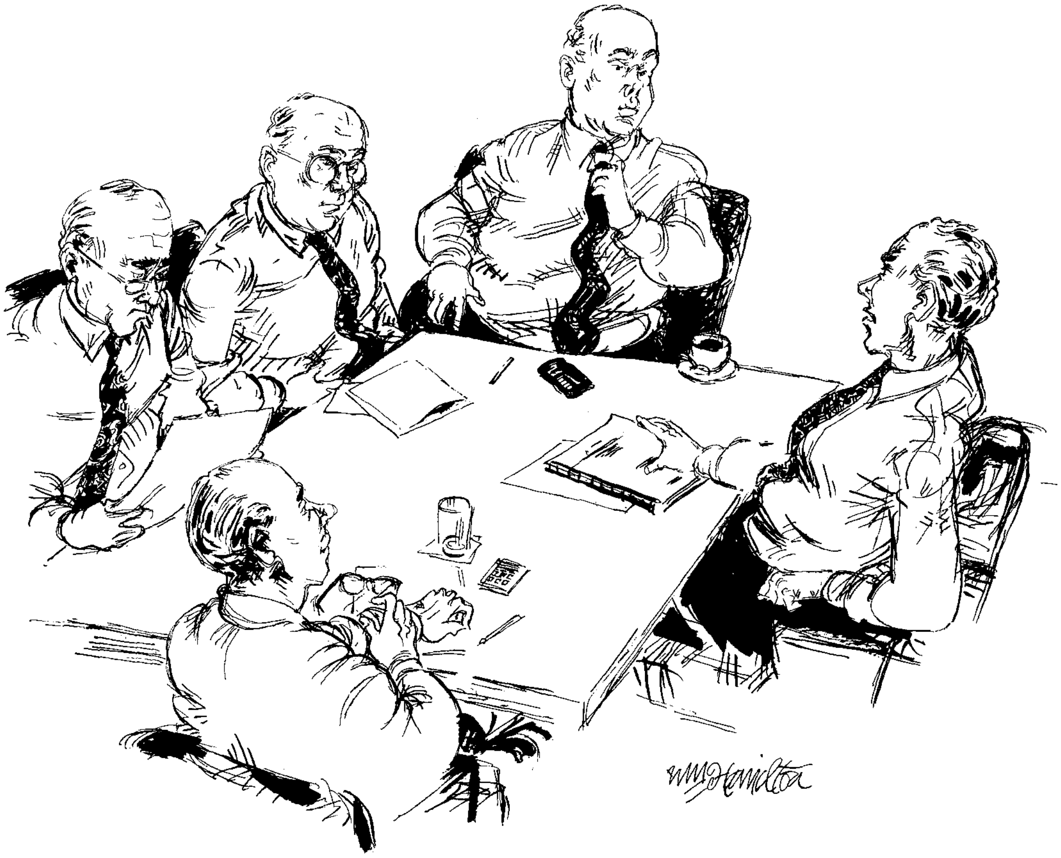
While Crystal was living at Queensboro and was visiting her baby at Bronx-Lebanon at two o'clock one Sunday morning (the hospital permitted visits around the clock), Daquan came by and caught her talking to John, the guy she had been dating (but not sleeping with) when Daquan met her and won her away from him. Daquan wanted to fight Crystal that Sunday morning. “We did a lot of punching and grabbing over the years,” she says. “When I was fifteen, I hit him over the head with a glass ashtray shaped like a gingerbread man. When I was on the phone with my male friends, he'd try to listen; I'd smash him over the head with the phone.”

Around the time of little Daquan's birth, Crystal had told her mother how much she was in love with Daquan, her infidelities notwithstanding. She stretched out the monosyllable so that anyone hearing her would have written down "looo-ooove." "I give it a year after that baby is born," Florence had said. "Then tell me how much you looo-ooove him."

At sixteen, Crystal took care to leave her engagement ring in her pocket or in her dresser drawer except when she was with Daquan. "I realized I was making a fool of myself," she says. "Daquan's expectations were husband and wife and me to call him every time I got home from school. At that age, I was blossing and blooming. There was a lot of fun to be had going to roller rinks and discos with people I was meeting nearer my age, but Daquan was getting upset and asking all these questions. I was sixteen, he was twenty-five. I sat him down and told him he'd been where I was going. 'I never had a childhood, but I'm going to have a teen-agehood,' I said. 'Maybe we'll get back together when I'm older.' I dated younger guys. Their demands was less great. And they were better-looking. Daquan walks funny and his eyes is always bloodshot. I'm five feet and a half a inch, and he's shorter than that. For me, you got to be at least five-eight and built big, with lots and lots of muscles. I look at Daquan now and I ask myself, 'How the hell did I do it?' "

During Crystal's sixteenth summer, she met Richard, a student at Howard University who was home on vacation. He was tall and muscular, but, she says, "the sex wasn't there." Then, in August of 1987, she started seeing Diamond. He took her horseback riding on their first date. On later dates, they went to Coney Island and to the beach at Far Rockaway, and rode around on his red Suzuki motorcycle. They first made love in October, at the Capri, a hotel with short-stay rates near the group home. Diamond, a high-school graduate, lived with his mother, his grandmother, and his sister. Crystal and Diamond later made love, with his mother's tacit consent, in his room. "He was the best in bed, before or since, and for the year and a half before we split I was unfaithful to him only once, for five minutes," she says. Crystal becomes wistful and teary when she talks about Diamond. "No one never took me horseback riding before Diamond," she says. "It was the first time I was close to a horse. I had never gone to the beach with anyone, never looked at no moon. The water, the waves, and the sand—we raced from one lifeguard chair to the next. We put a blanket on the back of his bike and he kissed me—that man showed me some romantic times. People said, 'All them girls in the group home is ho's, let's get one of them girls and stick them.' Diamond never caught that attitude. I would go to the movies with my girlfriend, and Diamond would have a cab pick us up to take us there. He'd be busy selling drugs but he'd stop to call a cab to take us home from the movies. He made me feel good about myself."

THE acid-washed blouse and jeans that Crystal had paid for at Macy's were part of her wardrobe for Satellite Academy, a school to which she would be transferring in the fall of 1987. Flushing High School had proved too "scholastic" for Crystal; her haphazard junior-high-school years hadn't prepared her for subjects like social studies, and she acknowledges that she had "a bad attitude." One day, she and two friends hung out in the corridor outside her Flushing High math classroom after the bell rang. She then knocked on the classroom door. "A classmate made an attempt to open the door, but the teacher said to sit back down," Crystal says. "So I banged on a glass pane in the classroom door and it broke. After that, the teacher hurried up and opened the door. I asked her why she ain't let me in, because I felt she had dissed me. She told me not to worry, she wasn't going to write me up this time, just take a seat. The bitch was scared. At the end of the class, she wrote out a memo for maintenance to sweep up the glass and replace the pane. I turned myself in to the dean after that incident, and she said 'Don't worry about it.' That was only because she couldn't put nothing in my record, because the teacher didn't write me up.

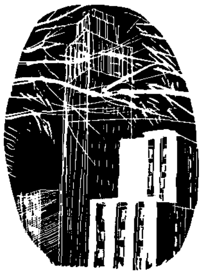


*"For some reason, we aren't appealing enough to those awful little bastards everyone hates."*

Usually, I got written up for every little thing—like cutting some guy with a pocket knife after gym class—and the dean was unreasonable. She told me to drop out and go get my G.E.D., like I was a dog." (The G.E.D. is the General Equivalency Diploma for high school.)

The other residents of the 107th Avenue group home didn't fare any better at Flushing. Like Crystal, they lacked educational skills, motivation, and discipline, felt overwhelmed by the size of the school, and fell through the cracks. St. Christopher's educational coördinator had a reason for sending them there. Among the common characteristics of students at Satellite Academy, a public city Alternative High School, with four campuses—two in Manhattan, one in the Bronx, and one in Jamaica, Queens—are that they have between ten and twenty credits and that they have attended ninth grade but have fallen behind their grade level; mostly students aged sixteen and older are accepted. To date, none of the group-home residents have stayed the course at Flushing, but going there at least exposed them to Langston Hughes and made them eligible to transfer to Satellite.

Satellite is a small, no-frills school, with a high faculty-to-student ratio. Its Jamaica campus has a hundred and ninety students, in the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades, and a staff of fourteen. About seventy per cent of the students are black; most of the remainder are Hispanic. The school day is divided into six periods, or "slots," a day, and the school year is divided into four ten-week cycles. One of Satellite's purposes is to help students catch up. They are able to accumulate sixteen credits a year—four per cycle—rather than the ten per year they can accumulate in schools like Flushing. The six slots at the Jamaica campus don't include gym (there is no gymnasium), study hall (a frill), or calculus (few students spend more than two years at Satellite, and even those who do rarely manage to complete ninth- and tenth-grade math). Satellite's teachers consider the most important part of the curriculum to be Family Group, in which groups of between fifteen and eighteen students sit in a circle two or three times a week to discuss personal problems and school problems. For Family Group, the students are given credits in English. In the past, they were also given credits for holding part-time jobs and internships and for doing independent study.



Crystal preferred Satellite to Flushing. It was smaller, her teachers were more lenient and casual (students addressed them by their first names), her peers were more congenial—and it was easier to cheat. Students who had an English test in the first or second slot would give the test questions and answers to those scheduled to take the test in the third or sixth slot. Crystal wrote down the questions and answers on her hand, or on a piece of paper she slipped into her blouse sleeve, or underneath the desk, or under the "test-exam." Students caught cheating weren't necessarily dismissed; they were just given zeros. The teachers were there because they had chosen to work with adolescents who had known trouble. Crystal's counsellor, a Princeton graduate and former caseworker, would follow her to the girls' bathroom, where she often went to meet a friend from another class; he would knock on the door and encourage her to return to the classroom.

Crystal didn't do well at Satellite during her first year. She hadn't changed her ways: she was excessively absent, late, and high. In January of 1988, several days before her eighteenth birthday and the end of her first semester, she considered dropping out—almost fifty per cent of Satellite's students fail to graduate—and spoke of settling for her G.E.D. Her counsellor at Satellite and her social worker at St. Christopher's prevailed upon her to stay in school.

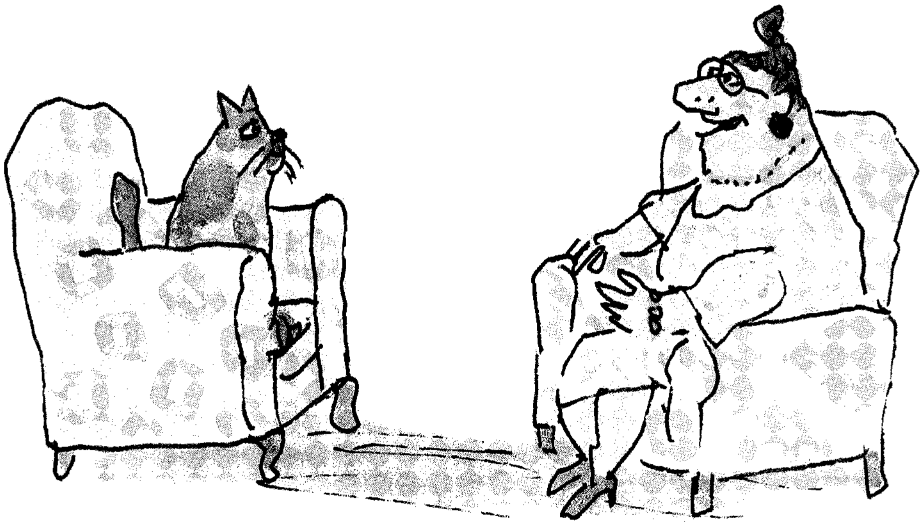
Crystal's eyes—hazel if she is wearing her contact lenses, brown if she isn't—gleam with remembered joy when she looks back upon her eighteenth birthday. Diamond had appeared at the group home with a Gucci bag and a pair of Gucci boots, three silvery balloons printed with the words "Happy Birthday, I Love You," and a bouquet of flowers. "Everyone's face lit up with jealousy," Crystal says.

Federal and state laws require child-care agencies like St. Christopher-Ottilie to offer family-planning services to children twelve years of age and over. Since her entry into the group home, Crystal had been using birth-control pills. In August, 1987, she had a series of stomach aches she attributed to the pill. The doctor she had been seeing regularly was on vacation. Another doctor recommended that Crystal stop taking the pill to give her body a rest. In February, 1988, she discovered that she was pregnant—"I guess because we done it so much," she says. Crystal told Diamond she was going to have an abortion: since she had one child in foster care, it struck her as wrong to have a second child. Diamond had no children, but he accepted Crystal's decision. He gave her an enormous white stuffed bear for Valentine's Day. Several days later, she wrote the following note: "I Crystal Taylor, Resident of St. Christopher-Ottilie, 223-07 107th Ave. is writting letter to confirm that after talking with my social worker . . . I know my options that I can make, but being that I'm not ready to care for another child and finacially I can't care for another child, so I rather have an *Obortion.*"

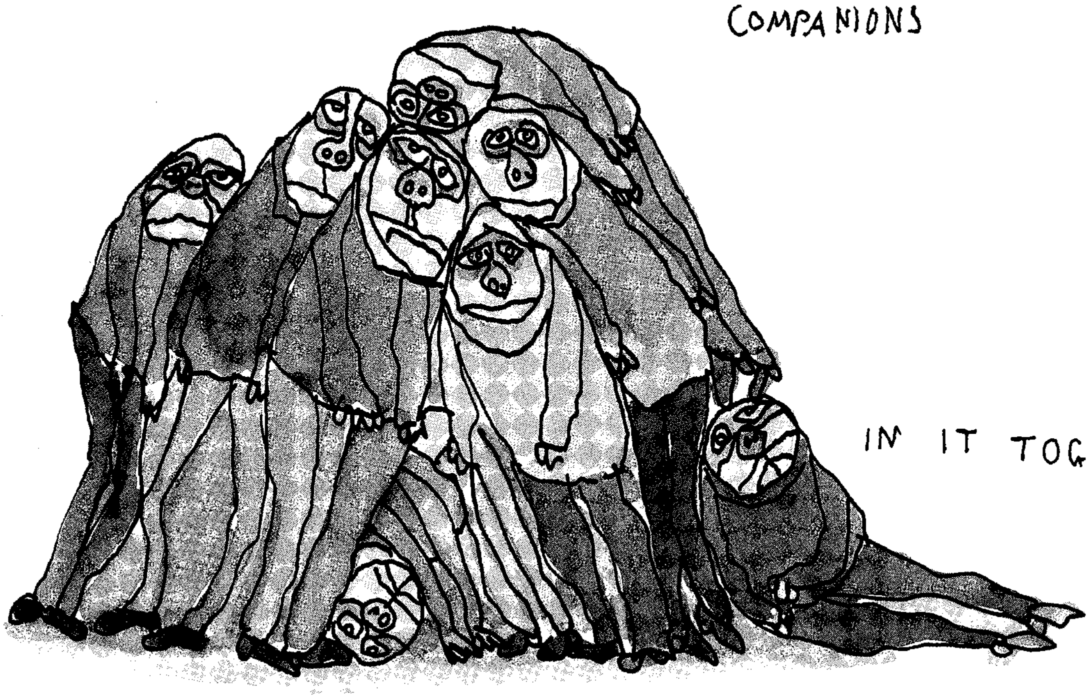
On March 1st, ten days after the abortion, Diamond Madison removed a gold-link bracelet from his arm, transferred it to Crystal's, and went to jail on Riker's Island. He had been arrested twice with large sums of money on him and no way to account for how he had come by the money honestly, and was given a six-month sentence. With time off for good behavior, he served four months. Between March and July, Crystal visited him faithfully the three days a week she was permitted to visit. She missed only two days: she was with little Daquan on Easter weekend, and with big Daquan on Mother's Day weekend.

ALMOST from the day a child is placed in foster care, plans are made to discharge the child. The original plan drawn up for Crystal by St. Christopher's was "discharge to biological mother." When Crystal was fifteen, this was not considered a realistic goal, because of Florence's drug addiction, refusal to seek help, and enduring homelessness. Throughout 1985, monthly attempts made by Crystal's social worker to reach Florence were futile: she didn't answer letters sent to her last known address, on Findlay Avenue. The social worker knew that Crystal visited her mother in the Bronx, often in a park, and talked to her on the phone fairly

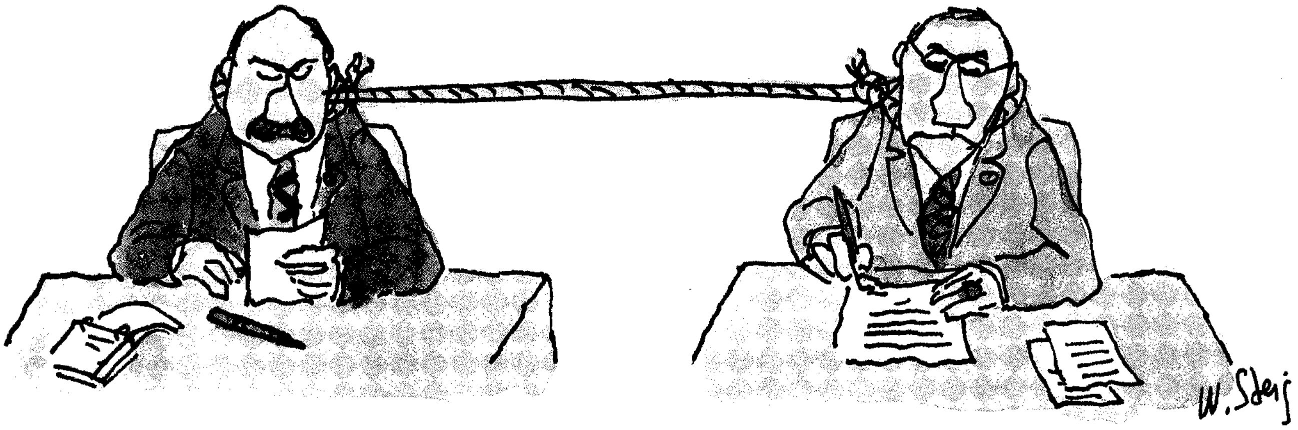
# RELATIONSHIPS



COMPANIONS



IN IT TOGETHER



BUSINESS PARTNERS

*"I thought we had something special going—then, for Christmas, I get these cheap Italian loafers."*

regularly, but Florence preferred to keep those contacts informal. Whenever a social worker asked Florence for a phone number, Florence said that Crystal knew how to get hold of her. Cousin Hazel had no telephone, but a woman in her apartment building who babysat for Crystal's younger siblings did, and there was a telephone at the nursing home where Florence's current man, Clarence, worked as a janitor.

Crystal acknowledged that some of her meetings with her mother were frustrating, because Florence was often high or intoxicated. "My mother didn't recognize me until I got right into her face," she said after one Saturday visit. A child-care worker who saw Florence when she came to the group home for the first time, around Thanksgiving of 1985, remembers her as "a fat bag, unkempt, unwashed, and boisterous, who talked too much, laughed too much, and made the mistake of asking for a beer." She also remembers that Crystal, who was fastidious and was dressed "impeccable," seemed embarrassed by her mother's behavior and determined never to look like her or sink to that level. "And yet," the child-care worker adds, "there was an unshakable bond between them."

Soon after Crystal turned sixteen, Special Services for Children accepted a "change of permanency goal" proposed by St. Christopher's for Crystal: discharge to independent living. In the world of foster care, there are goals within goals within goals. For the next several years, the long-term-treatment goals for Crystal included graduating from high school, securing a full-time job, and making a home for her son. Crystal was highly goal-resistant. She appeared in no hurry to get through school. Her social worker discovered when she contacted Flushing High School in May of 1986 that Crystal had been absent thirty days and late thirty-six times since January. She had little interest in employment. She had enjoyed a summer youth job in 1987 as a hospital receptionist, but a social worker noted in March of 1988 that "the only effort Crystal made to finding a job was talking about finding a job." And she declined St. Christopher's many attempts to interest her in a mother-child program, in which she would live in a St. Christopher's house with other young mothers and their children, attend school (day care would be provided for the mothers during their school hours), and look after Daquan evenings and weekends, thereby acquiring the "parenting skills" that the agency felt she needed. Crystal insisted that she wasn't ready for this. It suited her to have little Daquan exactly where he was—at the Hargroves', where she could be an every-other-weekend mother, and do a minimum of Pampering, feeding, and bathing him.

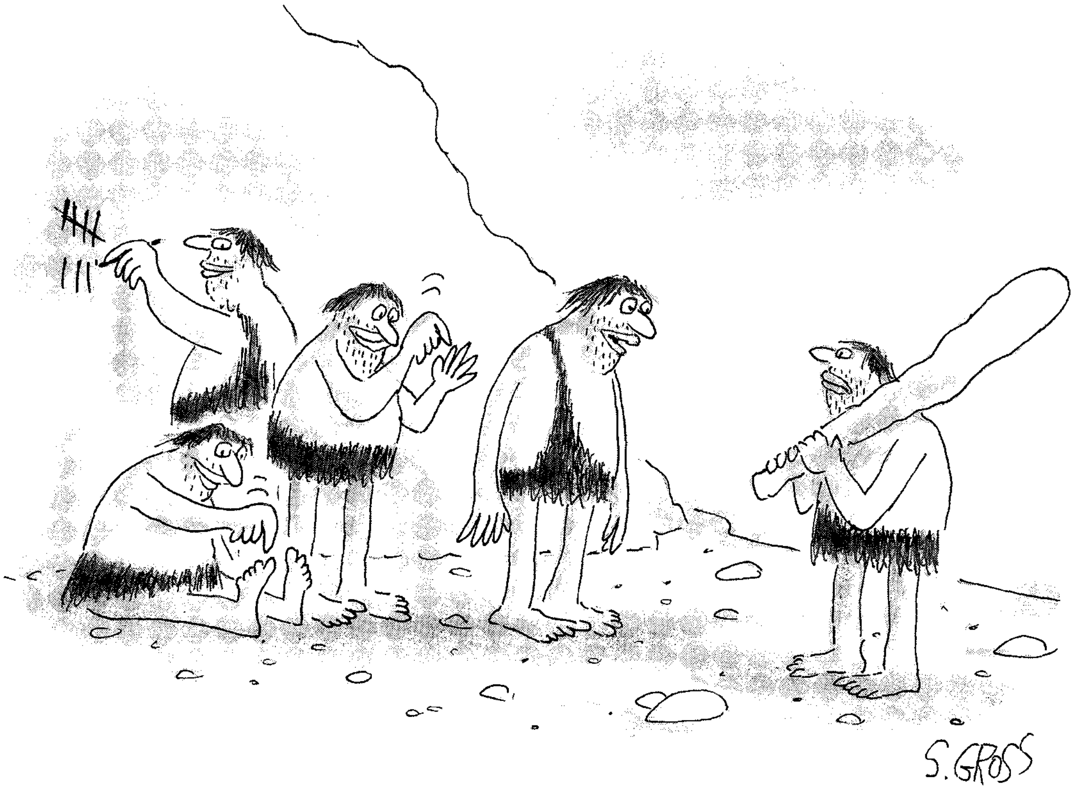
"I've got no parently patience," Crystal acknowledges. She found it arduous to take Daquan on outings. "It was hard for me to carry him in one hand and his carriage and my pocketbook in the other," she says. "The baby was heavy, and so was the carriage." Crystal's vision of motherhood was buying Daquan expensive toys at Christmas and leather clothes (his first Easter suit, when he was six months, was custom-made), and taking him on annual or semiannual outings to the circus or to amusement parks with big Daquan, "so's when he grows up he'll remember he went with his mommy and daddy to Sesame Place." The status quo was also acceptable to Daquan Jefferson.

Margaret Hargrove was content as well. The Long children had not suited her. A foster parent has the right to ask an agency to remove a child on short notice. Regina Long was the first to go—"due to unresolvable disruptive behavior in the Hargrove home," according to St. Christopher-Ottilie's records—in the fall of 1985. Her brother and two sisters were freed for adoption by the Family Court in January of 1986, but one by one they left the Hargroves—to go to another relative, another foster parent, another agency. Rawanda was the last of the Long children to leave the Hargroves', at the end of 1987.

Before little Daquan came to the Hargroves', Margaret Hargrove had given up her job at the diner to devote herself full time to foster care. In 1985, as the Long teen-agers began to depart, she took in Frances Smart, six, and Donna Smart, seven, who were the third and fourth children of a drug-addicted mother; she would never take a chance on another teen-ager. (Her sister adopted three of Ms. Smart's children, and Margaret Hargrove adopted Frances and Donna in 1989, and subsequently had Ms. Smart's twelfth and thirteenth children in foster care.)

It was financially to Margaret Hargrove's advantage to maintain six children in residence. She receives what she calls an adequate "paycheck," which depends on the age of the child (foster parents receive more for six-to-eleven-year-olds than for infants-to-five-year-olds and still more for children twelve or over) and on ever-changing rates. In December of 1984, when two-month-old Daquan Drummond was presented to Alice Hargrove, St. Christopher's sent Alice's mother a stipend of $242 a month for him. The current rates for foster-home care in the New York metropolitan area range from $386 to $526 per month for healthy children. For "special" children (those with moderate physical and/or mental disabilities) and "exceptional" children (those with illnesses like AIDS or other extreme physical or mental handicaps), the rates are $845 and $1,281 per month, respectively. These stipends are tax-free. Each child also receives a clothing allowance set by the state and has his or her dental and medical care covered by Medicaid (at a cost of between three and four dollars a day). An agency's administrative costs add to the yearly sum required to keep youngsters in foster care. The Hargroves receive the same amount of money for the children they adopt, because it is state policy to subsidize adoptions of foster children with handicaps or special conditions, and those who are considered hard to place: those who have been in foster care in the same home for at least eighteen months; siblings; children who have been freed for adoption for at least six months; and minority children who are over the age of eight and white children over the age of ten.

Social workers called regularly at the Hargrove home, and, because St. Christopher's has a low turnover rate, Crystal and little Daquan had only a few social workers apiece over their years in foster care. The Hargroves' house was depicted in favorable terms: it was quiet, efficient, well run; children were playing; dinner was cooking; homework was being done. The only negative observation made was that Margaret Hargrove, who was called "very directive," had a better relationship with her younger foster children than with her older foster children, with whom there was "underlying tension." Little Daquan's care was exemplary. A plump, adorable child, he was the "little prince" of the family, sociable, bubbling, active—a "joyous child who makes people smile" and "receives constant love and attention from foster mother, her daughter, and three teenage foster children." (He was subsequently doted on by Frances and Donna Smart.) Goals were set for him, too—not just drinking from a cup but also increasing his vocabulary. He met them and might have met the second one faster if everyone else in the household hadn't anticipated his needs, leaving him with little



*"We are neither hunters nor gatherers. We are accountants."*

motivation to express himself verbally. A worker who saw Crystal at the Hargroves' observed that she was extremely warm and affectionate toward her son, and that he recognized Crystal as "mommy" and "understands he has two mommies."

After Crystal turned sixteen, and Daquan had been in foster care for more than a year, it was harder for St. Christopher's to justify keeping him in foster care with Crystal as the "discharge resource," because her own discharge was too far off. Consequently, the agency made an attempt to discharge him. He would go to live with his biological father, because Daquan Jefferson had a job and parents who expressed a willingness to help him care for his child; it would be stipulated that Daquan retain custody only until Crystal had completed high school, had an apartment, and had a job that would enable her to support her son.

A great deal of effort was expended in 1986 and 1987 on discharging little Daquan to his father, but no discharge took place. The records do not make absolutely clear why, but they do reveal that the discharge was not what Daquan Jefferson or Crystal Taylor or Margaret Hargrove wanted. Daquan was willing to take his son, but he asked Margaret Hargrove if she would care for him during the day on weekdays once he had custody, and said he would care for the boy, with his parents, on weekends. Margaret Hargrove at first consented to this plan, but St. Christopher's did not. Crystal opposed having her son go to live in the Bronx. She felt he was receiving better care at the Hargroves' than he would at the Jeffersons', and claimed that once Daquan had custody he would try to limit her access to her son: Daquan had remained "in love with" Crystal long after she went on to date other men. When Margaret Hargrove was threatened with the departure of little Daquan—who slept with the Hargroves in their bed, and who, alone among their foster children, was taken out of town for Alice's college graduation, and to Disney World—she told Daquan Jefferson he could no longer visit his son in her home on Saturdays and Sundays. She, too, felt that little Daquan was getting better care with her than he would get in the Bronx. In 1986, she spoke of adopting Crystal, as if that would enable her to adopt little Daquan. When big Daquan's father, Elmer Jefferson, died, in May, 1987, the discharge plan foundered. Children whose goal is to be discharged to a relative are usually kept in care for only two years. St. Christopher's went to court numerous times to request extensions of placement for little Daquan; the extensions were granted.

As soon as Diamond Madison was released from jail, in July of 1988, the romance resumed, but, except for the sex, things were never quite the same. Crystal had taken a part-time job as a cashier at a discount store in May, and insisted on paying for their first night back together, at the Capri. Diamond didn't immediately return to drug dealing—he knew that the cops who had arrested him twice would be watching him closely—and he had little money. Crystal didn't want him dealing drugs, and encouraged him to get a job, just as she had done four years earlier with Daquan Jefferson. Diamond got an honest job for three weeks and then quit: nine-to-five didn't suit his temperament. He eventually returned to selling drugs, but on a much smaller scale. When Crystal asked him for a suède skirt, he said she would have to wait, and bought himself sneakers instead. Her friends teased her. "Daquan would buy you anything," they said, "and still all you want is Diamond."

Not quite all. While Diamond was in jail, Crystal had hung out with two other drug dealers (including the one "I

## WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?

"Look! It's a wedding!" At the ice-cream shop's
pristine picture window, the fortyish
blonde in the nice-mother shorts and top
stops short to raise two cones, one in each hand,
as if to toast the frothy blur of bride
emerging from St. Brigid's across the green.
"Mom," a boy answers, "I said I want a *dish*."
But this washes under her, while a well-matched band
of aqua-clad attendants pours outside
to laugh among fresh, buttonholed young men.

Young men ... remember *them*? Her entourage
now is six boys, and she buys each one his wish.
When she peers up from her purse, the newlyweds
have sped away, and she notices at last,
on the littered steps of the Universalist
Society, some ten yards from St. Brigid's,
a rat-haired old woman in a camouflage
Army-Navy outfit, in whose pockets bulge
rags, or papers, and an unbagged beverage.
Looks like a flask of vodka. But no, it's dish-

washing liquid! It's Ivory, the household god.
The shape is clear from here: a voodoo doll,
headless, with the waist pinched, like a bride.
Poor thing—her dirty secret nothing worse
than the dream of meals to wash up after. While
what *she* most craves, standing at this font
of hope, the soda fountain, with the boys
all eating hand-to-mouth, is not to miss
the thing that ... Well, it's hard to say—but what
she'd want, if we were given what we want.

—MARY JO SALTER

screwed for five minutes, first time I ever regretted that") and had started smoking coolies and "woolas" (a mixture of reefer and crack). Diamond sold crack but didn't use it. "He was afraid of me turning out to be a crackhead," Crystal says. "He told me to stay away from the guys I had been with while he was in jail. I said I would, but I didn't, and he beat me up outside the group home several times—1988 was my year of crack. I told Diamond about Kyle, the first guy I had intercourse with after he got out of jail, because I felt guilty. He then started fooling around with other girls, and I messed around with other guys, who could show me the good life."

*"I can't sleep."*

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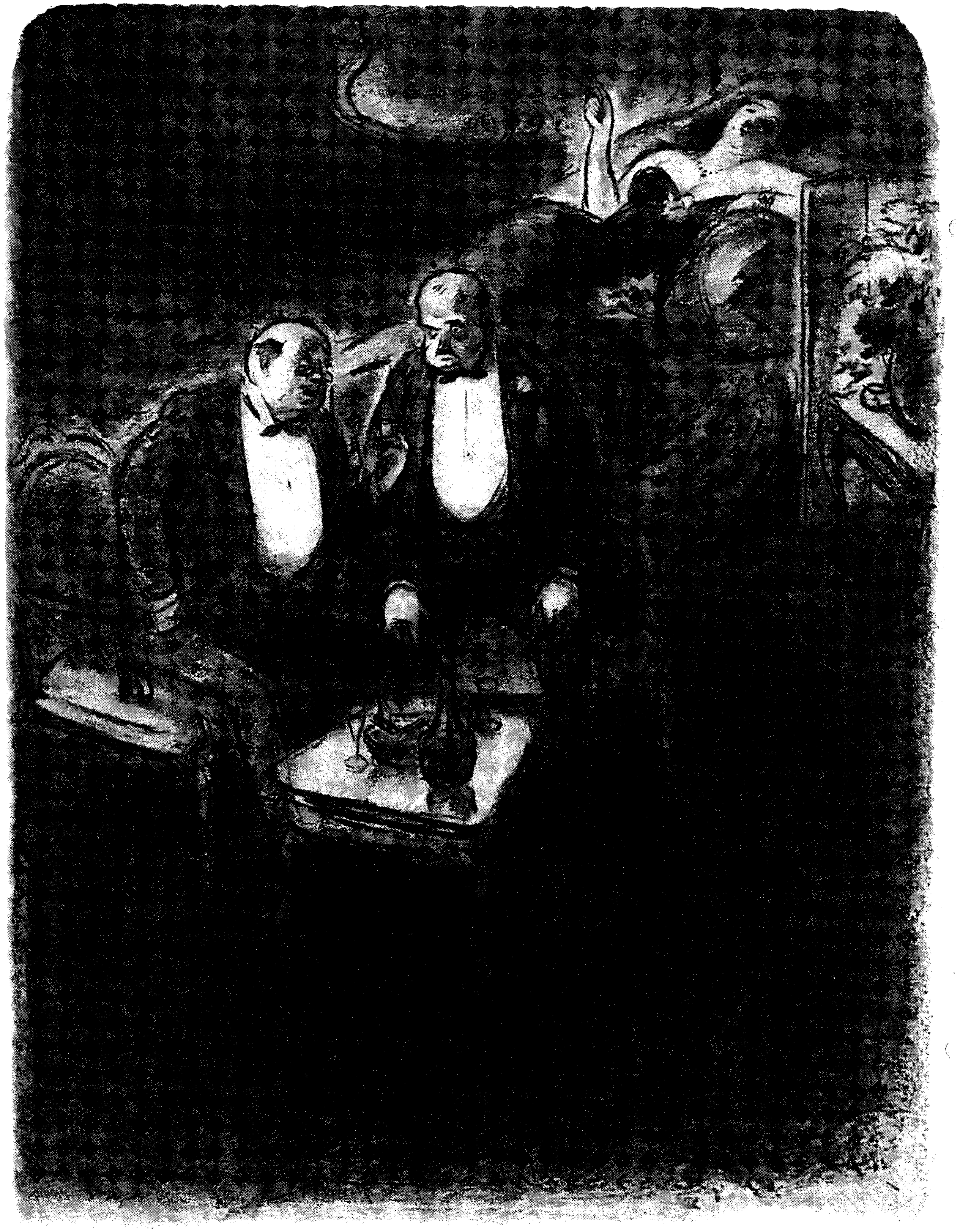
That summer, the social worker Crystal had had for two years left St. Christopher's. Her new social worker warned her that unless she showed the court that she was making progress toward achieving her goals she would eventually lose custody of her child to Daquan. Daquan had never threatened anything of the kind, but after nearly four years in the group home Crystal was ready to get on with her life for reasons of her own. The dealers who provided her with drugs hung out on Hempstead Avenue, a few blocks from the group home, where there was a cluster of small shops—bodegas, a Chinese carryout, a video store. At first, they supplied her with complimentary crack. Soon she had to buy her own, and she decided that it wasn't a good investment: the money would be better spent on clothes. She wanted to put some distance between herself and temptation.

By 1988, the five girls who had celebrated Crystal's fifteenth birthday with her were long gone. Lynn had left at the age of eighteen, in the summer of 1985, after graduating from Satellite, because she was sick of being in foster care; she went to live with a boyfriend and had a child two years later. Tina and Simone left for similar reasons, and also had babies. Yolanda turned to crack. Nicole became a prostitute. Fifteen or twenty other girls had entered and left 107th Avenue between 1985 and 1988. A roommate of Crystal's—one of the two with whom she travelled to the movies on Forty-second Street instead of to Flushing High—had a psychotic episode, smashed a number of mirrors and windows at the group home, and wound up in a psychiatric hospital. A few girls went to live with relatives. Two or three went to college. Some were forced to leave, because they refused to go to school. Several simply left: one day they were there, the next day they weren't. They were never seen again. The staff learned what had happened to one former resident only when they read about her in a newspaper: she had been arrested for transporting guns from the South to New York City by Greyhound bus.

Crystal's favorite period at the group home was her first six months. "We used to always sit down and have conversations about things like sex," she recalls. "What a man expects from a woman, how he treats a woman after having sex, me and the other girls, each one voicing they opinions. I was the youngest, so I was getting more of a learning. I was getting wiser." She has referred to a couple of her original housemates as "the older sisters I never had" and to several of the staff members as "family." After those six months, Crystal began to complain about how much her housemates stole from her. Stealing is commonplace in congregate living, and Crystal flaunted her leather coats and bags and gold jewelry—gifts from Daquan, Diamond, and her other male acquaintances. She complained about the constant thefts but never gave her valuables to the child-care workers for safekeeping. With each passing year, she displayed more reluctance to do her chores, to refrain from using profanity, to obey her curfew. She bribed one child-care worker with beer when she returned late from dates. She seemed to know just how many hours she could be AWOL and how much drinking and drugs she could do without getting tossed out. It was as if she had made up her mind to stay at the group home as long as possible, because she

# FIFTY-EIGHT YEARS AGO IN THE NEW YORKER



*"I never told her about the depression. She would have worried."*

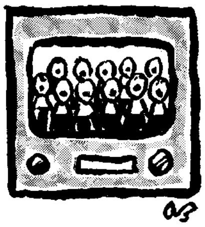
knew of no better alternative. She was the only one to come to 107th Avenue after having a child; she had been where the others were going.

In 1985, six former foster-care recipients between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one who had been discharged to independent living and three recipients currently in group homes who expected to be discharged brought suit against the governor of New York, claiming lack of supervision of those discharged and lack of provision of discharge plans or transition services before discharge for the others. The primary reason for the lawsuit seemed to be that a substantial number of people in homeless shelters had been discharged from foster care. The case resulted in greater attention to preparing older children to live independently upon discharge from foster care and to arranging more orderly discharges. Agencies like St. Christopher-Ottilie had been providing many such transition services but had not been adequately funded for them until the suit was settled, in 1986.

Crystal was fortunate. St. Christopher's opened an independent-living apartment for two girls in 1987 and a second in 1988. In October of 1988, Crystal applied for admission to an independent-living apartment. The first tenants of the 1987 apartment had recently been evicted for breaking one of the cardinal independent-living-apartment rules: no overnight guests. During Crystal's second year at Satellite, her attendance improved. Students had to sign a contract with each teacher, agreeing to a maximum number of cuts per subject in a cycle; if they exceeded the cuts, they were not given credit for the subject even if they attained a passing grade. In the fall of 1988, Crystal took night classes at Jamaica High School in two subjects she had failed the previous year at Satellite—math and English. It seemed that she would be able to graduate in June, 1989, and that presumption was a point in her favor when she was being considered for an independent-living apartment. The staff at the group home had always been fond of Crystal—her keen sense of humor and her lack of self-pity were endearing qualities that made many adults forgive her temper tantrums, outbursts of obscenity, and selfishness—but as she grew older and became a house leader they worried about the poor example she set the younger girls, and thought she should move on. On December 27, 1988, Crystal moved into the independent-living apartment that had been opened the previous year. Her roommate was Benita, an alumna of another St. Christopher's group home.

The apartment, which was situated in Jamaica, a twenty-minute ride from the 107th Avenue group home, in Queens Village, occupied the second floor of a two-family house. It had a separate entrance on the ground floor and its own staircase. The bedroom was sufficiently large to accommodate twin beds and two dressers; the living room, kitchen, and bathroom were adequate; all the rooms had windows.

Crystal and Benita broke the rules of the independent-living apartment at once. Their girlfriends and boyfriends spent the night. No drugs or liquor were allowed on the premises. They drank Absolut vodka and Rémy-Martin cognac, kept a six-pack of wine coolers in the refrigerator, and smoked reefer. Shortly after moving in, however, Crystal did give up crack. When they had been in the apartment a few months, a social worker paid an unscheduled visit, and saw a "roach" (marijuana butt) in an ashtray. Crystal and Benita lied their way out of the situation by saying that a girlfriend had come over and smoked reefer; they claimed they had told her to put it out and she had, but they hadn't dumped the ashtray. The social worker's advice was that if they couldn't keep their company from doing drugs in the apartment they shouldn't have company. "They bought our story and threatened us with more pop-up visits, but they didn't follow through for a long time," Crystal says.



One way an independent-living apartment helped young women make the transition from group-home life to life on their own was by enabling them to save money. Their rent and all utilities were paid, and they had access to a revolving cash fund of up to two hundred and twenty-five dollars a week. That sum was intended to cover groceries, cleaning supplies, laundry, dry cleaning, transportation to school and work, and such recreational activities as movies. To be reimbursed for their legitimate expenses, all they had to do was to produce receipts for the money they had spent. They were also given a clothing allowance and an additional monthly stipend from the state of between twenty and forty dollars a month (twenty dollars at age sixteen, forty at age twenty). The independent-living residents who were employed full time or part time were supposed to show their social workers their paychecks and bank books: they were expected to bank half of their earnings and also the stipends. Their savings—some girls left the agency with two or three thousand dollars—might be spent on a month's security deposit and the first month's rent on an apartment after they left the St. Christopher's apartment.

Crystal had injured her thumb operating the cash register at her job in the spring of 1988, and had quit during the summer. Her new social worker urged her to get another job. In February of 1989, she found an after-school job at Cheap John's, a store that featured bargain goods. ("Five rolls of toilet paper for a dollar," Crystal recalls.)

A week or two after she started there, she found more lucrative employment when Furman, a Jamaican with short dreadlocks who supplied Crystal with weed and tried unsuccessfully to date her, offered her five hundred dollars plus expenses to carry half a pound of cocaine to Washington, D.C. All the other girls he had used as couriers had been caught. Furman said he would accompany her on the first run, on February 21st, to show her what to do. The twenty-first was a Tuesday, so Crystal went to Satellite, to her four-to-eight job at Cheap John's, and to Furman's house to fetch the goods. Following his instructions, she wrapped a Ziploc bag of cocaine in a paper bag, put the paper bag at the bottom of a large Gucci pocketbook she used as a book bag, and covered it with books. They took a cab to Thirty-sixth Street and walked to Penn Station—Crystal walking a few steps behind Furman. He had given her a hundred and fifty dollars and some instructions: if he was picked up on the train, she was to take a train back home. He had given her enough money for the return trip. Crystal bought a one-way ticket. They left New York on an

*"Didn't I tell you I'm not taking any calls this evening?"*

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evening train. They sat on opposite sides of the aisle, acting like strangers. Crystal looked at one of her schoolbooks, did a little homework, and then read a novel by Jackie Collins, her favorite author. They arrived at Washington's Union Station after midnight. Furman got into a cab, looked around, and told her to jump in: his fear of getting caught appeared to be over. They travelled a short distance to a four-story building. Two men were waiting for them in a small apartment. While the men busied themselves at the kitchen stove, turning the cocaine into crack, Crystal stayed in a bedroom, watching television. Furman handed her a hundred dollars for a shuttle ticket home and the five hundred dollars she had earned. Crystal had been nervous on the train. That night she slept on and off, but she realized that what she was doing was dangerous; she felt afraid, and prayed that the night would end and the daylight would come. In the morning, Furman took her to a McDonald's for breakfast and then drove her, in a car that belonged to one of the Washington drug dealers, to National Airport. Crystal used her Satellite identification to buy a shuttle ticket at the student rate. It was the first time she had flown, and she liked it: flying was exciting. She took a cab from LaGuardia to the independent-living apartment and tossed about six hundred dollars in tens and twenties on the coffee table—her earnings, plus the extra train and plane money. She called Tonia at the group home.

"Where have you been?" Tonia asked her. "Diamond's been going crazy looking for you. Benita called me to ask where you was. He was in the apartment all night with her. He thought Benita knew you was sleeping with another man and just wasn't saying anything. At first, he wouldn't let Benita go to school, but then he did. You better get your lies together, because your Diamond is mad, he's really mad."

Crystal asked Tonia to come over to the apartment, by cab, at Crystal's expense, to keep her company: she was afraid of Diamond. Crystal went into the bathroom and took a shower. She heard the doorbell, put on a T-shirt, and went downstairs to answer it with a big grin: she was thinking about spending the money. It was Diamond. "Where you was?" he asked.

Crystal stuttered and hesitated, then turned and walked up the stairs.

"Come here," he said, standing in the living room as she headed for the bedroom to put on some clothes. He saw the cash on the coffee table. "Where did you get this money?" he asked. "You slept with a man for money. I know you."

Crystal told him she had earned the money carrying cocaine to Washington. She was happy she had made the drop safely and happy he'd been worried about her. In retrospect, Crystal thinks she smiled a little too hard. Diamond hit her. She hit him back. She tried to punch him as hard as he punched her. Then Tonia pulled up in a cab, and a friend of Diamond's also came upstairs. They couldn't break up the fight. Diamond knocked the cap off Crystal's front tooth. He thought he had really hurt her and tried to hug her. Crystal wanted to fight him some more. "I'm getting out of here, you fucking crazy," Diamond said when she hit him again. He snatched two hundred dollars of the money from the table and left. She thought he was trying to take temporary custody of all the money, to show her that what she had done was wrong, and grabbed the rest of the cash. When Crystal later spoke to Precious, another girlfriend of hers whom Diamond had called, she reprimanded Crystal for not having told Diamond she was going to Mrs. Hargrove's for the night—an alibi that would have covered her.

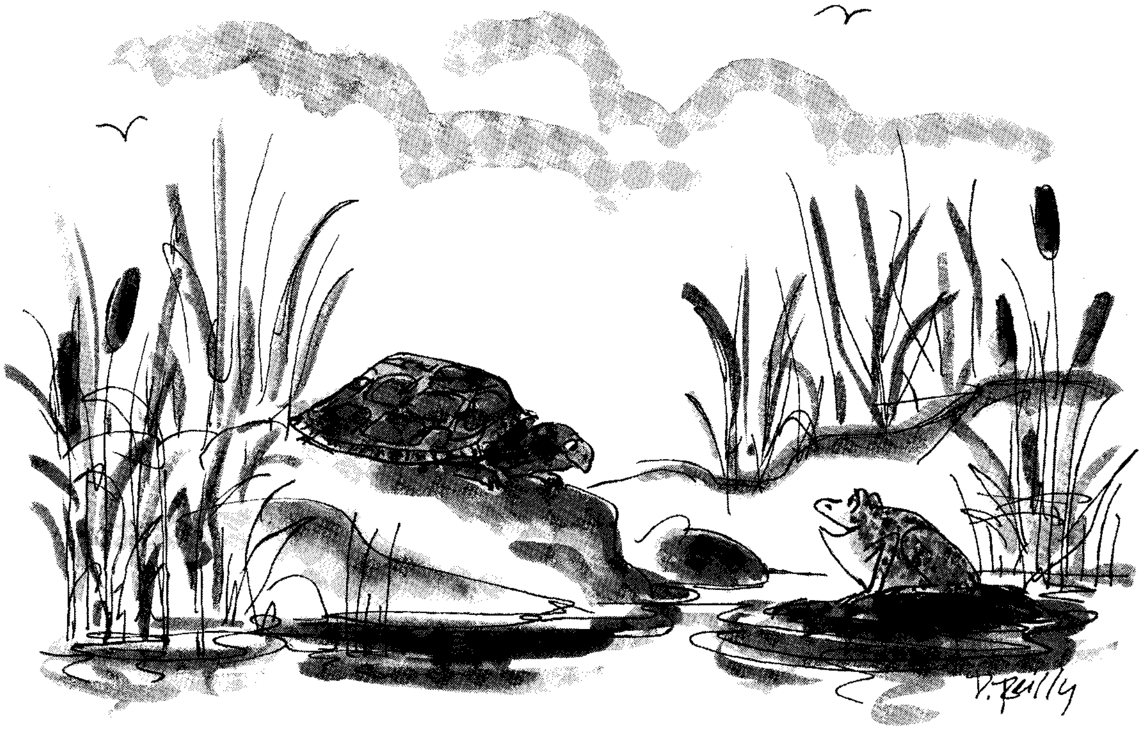
"I didn't carry no more drugs for Furman," Crystal says. "Even if Diamond hadn't hit me—and when he found out who I did it for he gave me another argument—I wouldn't have did it again. Diamond dealt in drugs, but he said he was a man what could take care of hisself. He reminded me I could have gotten killed in that apartment and that I had a son. He loved little Daquan. It was easy money, but it was too scary and I was afraid of losing Diamond's respect for good. I loved that man so much until it hurted." Crystal sought refuge in the group home on the night of the eighth.

When the staff of St. Christopher's learned that Crystal had been in a physical fight, her apartment was searched and her plane ticket found. "I told the social worker some nonsense about my girlfriend's boyfriend getting shot up in Virginia and she had no one to go with her and she'd pay for my ticket and I'd gone down there—some lame story," she says. "They suspected I'd done something illegal, but they didn't know what. I'd broken a rule, because I wasn't allowed to leave the state. I told them Diamond had hit me because I hadn't told him where I was going. They acted like they believed that, because he'd hit me hard before." The agency nurse referred Crystal to a dentist, and she got the cap put back on her tooth.

CRYSTAL did not return to Cheap John's: "I was tired of seeing them same old dull faces." In March, she got a temporary afternoon job in a vast room on West Fourteenth Street, in Manhattan, stuffing and sealing envelopes. Four weeks later, a layoff notice was posted near the time cards. That same week, Crystal heard from Veronica, a girl with whom she had drunk rum-and-Coca-Cola at J.H.S. 109. Veronica was working in the mailroom at an advertising agency on Madison Avenue at Fiftieth Street, and said the firm was hiring. Crystal had always liked the idea of "working with the big rich people in the big Manhattan buildings." On a rainy day, after picking up her last paycheck on Fourteenth Street, Crystal walked around the East Fifties and filled out applications at several firms in the area's glassy skyscrapers. A month later, she received a call from the advertising agency and went for a job interview. Crystal had already forgotten the job application, and Veronica had quit because one of the outside messengers who came up to the mailroom was pestering her. Crystal was hired as a part-time mail clerk. Her hours—4:30 P.M. to 9 P.M.—enabled her to continue at Satellite, which ended its day at 3 P.M.

Her first day of work was May 1st. The pay was four dollars and twenty-five cents an hour, not even a dollar above the minimum wage, but the job had an appealing fringe benefit: the company sent employees who stayed at work after 8 P.M. home by car service. That saved two homeward-bound subway and bus tokens per day—ten dollars' worth of tokens a week, in 1989—and an hour's travel time. Crystal, who already had her learner's permit, had always preferred cars to mass transit. In June, although she still needed to complete two courses before she could get her diploma, she participated in graduation ceremonies at Satellite, in a white cap and gown. Big Daquan rented a car for her in honor of the occasion (he has never had a driver's license or owned wheels of any kind, so Crystal did the driving), and little Daquan and Diamond attended the graduation. Crystal dropped out of summer school ("I couldn't deal with it in the nice weather"), finished her coursework at Satellite in the fall, and picked up her diploma in January of 1990, shortly after her twentieth birthday. By then, she was working full time at the ad agency, from 2 to 9 P.M. By then, little Daquan was living in the Bronx and was halfway through kindergarten.

Crystal and Daquan had been presented with an ultimatum in the fall of 1988: Take little Daquan out of foster care or give him up for adoption. No further extensions of placement would be considered; more people are willing to adopt babies and small children than to adopt older ones, so adoption becomes the permanency plan if return to the family is not possible or advisable. Foster parents are usually given the first chance to adopt children who have been in their care. Margaret Hargrove proposed an "open adoption" to Crystal and Daquan, in which the biological parents would retain certain rights of access, but although neither of them wanted to have their son on a full-time basis, neither of them had any intention of forfeiting any parental rights. Daquan Jefferson agreed to take his son until Crystal was out of foster care herself and was financially on her feet. Margaret Hargrove had other small children in foster care in 1989, but little Daquan was still her favorite. When he went to the Bronx for pre-discharge trial weekends at the Jeffersons', she expressed her displeasure over his imminent departure. She told her social worker that little



*"I've been doing some voice-overs—the funky rural sound is hot right now."*

Daquan was not supervised properly during the weekend visits, and returned to "the foster home in an obstinate manner." She also reported his reaction to her social worker: "This is my house and you're going to put me out of my goddam house," he had said. "The Bronx is dirty." Little Daquan moved to the Jeffersons' in September, 1989.

"One reason Daquan wanted the baby was he knew he'd see me more," Crystal says, and he did: she visited every weekend or two. Margaret Hargrove gave little Daquan a party for his fifth birthday—she invited his parents and other members of Crystal's family—and telephoned the Jefferson household frequently throughout the following months.

FOR his fifth birthday, Crystal gave her son a two-hundred-and-fifty-dollar gold bracelet with his name in diamonds. It was one of the rare moments after Diamond's release from jail when he had money to spare, and he contributed a hundred dollars toward the bracelet. Around that time, he asked Crystal for a hundred and fifty dollars, so that he could go job-hunting. She took the money out of her bank account. He spent it, along with money borrowed from other friends, on a secondhand Kawasaki Ninja motorcycle. Crystal was not pleased. Diamond and a friend made some money hauling dirt to construction sites with a dump truck and sold a little crack, but he wouldn't get an honest job and earn real money. "You started off doing for me. How are you going to end it like this?" Crystal asked him. Diamond came every now and again to what Crystal referred to as "the independent house" or invited her to his mother's apartment. After they had been in bed an hour or two, one of his friends inevitably paged him on a beeper and he left in a hurry. "His friends said 'Jump' and he answered 'How high?' " Crystal recalls. "He put them in front of me to hang out. I always said they would be the death of him."

By 1990, Crystal had a beeper herself, and was hanging out with an assortment of young drug dealers. They kept her in reefer and had plenty of money to buy her a pair of sneakers or a leather jacket and to take her to restaurants, parties, and clubs. She liked being wined and dined and riding around in their jeeps, BMWs, and "Benzes." She was having fun.

Her social worker was not pleased. The original plan for the independent-living apartments was that they were to be used by the residents for a year and a half at the most. The social worker wanted to "trial-discharge" Crystal in the summer of 1990, so that if she ran into trouble afterward St. Christopher's could again help her—though only for six months, until she reached twenty-one, the day the money stopped. In the spring of 1990, Crystal ducked many of her required weekly appointments with the social worker, didn't see the St. Christopher's psychologist (although he was one of her favorite people at the agency), and let her bank account dwindle. She was buying clothes and jewelry, having acrylic tips put on her nails, and getting her hair done. (When she was a little girl on Sheridan Avenue, her favorite possession was a doll whose hair she could wash, braid, curl on small rollers, and blow-dry. She played with it for hours; it was one way to tune out the misery that surrounded her.) Crystal has a talent for hair, and her hair style changes frequently—from a simple set with bangs to a French twist, or perhaps to a very elaborate affair, requiring the addition of blond braids or a hairpiece woven with seed pearls. Crystal had grown weary of group-home discussions and now ducked various obligatory independent-living-unit meetings, sensitivity groups, and workshops. They took time from her men and from her job. She particularly objected to an independent-living workshop held upstate, which caused her to miss four days at the office.

"She basically uses the independent-living-apartment program as a boarding house," her social worker wrote on her record. "She enjoys all the benefits but is reluctant to put anything back into it. . . . She makes little effort to help with responsibilities connected to the program, i.e. money management, dropping off receipts, attending workshops, and keeping appointments." Crystal felt that her part of the independent-living bargain consisted simply of working at the ad agency.

SEA
BAYVILLE
FOOD
LASZLO

Crystal mentioned to the social worker that she was having trouble with her boss about her hours of employment: she preferred daytime hours. The social worker offered to help her seek another job, but her schedule was soon switched; for a time it was 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., and then 6:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. She dallied about seeking an apartment. She admitted that she was afraid of letting go. She wanted to age out of St. Christopher's at twenty-one. She was lucky to live in one of the few states in the United States that keep young people in care until that age. In April, the social worker drove her to the Y.W.C.A. in Brooklyn. While she was there, a young man called on a woman resident, and the young woman had to come downstairs to see him. "I ain't living where nobody can't visit my room, in nobody's Y, in nobody's Brooklyn," Crystal said, and did not pursue residence at the Y.

While Crystal's social worker was planning Crystal's discharge, Crystal and Daquan were unplanning little Daquan's. In June, 1990, little Daquan, wearing a lime-green cap and gown, received a diploma from a Catholic kindergarten in the Bronx, in which his father had enrolled him. When Florence was evicted from the apartment on Sheridan Avenue, back in 1982, her furniture and other possessions had been confiscated by the marshals. She hadn't retrieved them. Most of Crystal's childhood photographs were lost, to her regret, so she tends to take photographs of the joyful events in her life. In the snapshots of her son's graduation, Crystal has on a three-piece peach-colored pants outfit that shows her trim figure to advantage. The outfit had a three-hundred-dollar price tag, but Daquan had bought it "hot" for fifty dollars from a friend who boosted clothes.

A week after his graduation, little Daquan was back at the Hargroves'. He was glad—there were no children his age at the Jeffersons', and he preferred playing with other youngsters in a back yard. So was his father—he liked to spend his time off from work with his friends. So was his mother—Crystal had never stopped believing that her son received better care on Long Island than he did in an increasingly dangerous part of the Bronx among teen-agers and adults who had no interest in a child. Margaret Hargrove was overjoyed at the return of her "star" (as one social worker had described little Daquan). Daquan Jefferson agreed to pay his son's first-grade tuition at a Catholic school on Long Island and to pay for school uniforms, and contributed fifty dollars every now and then for the child's clothes. Margaret Hargrove didn't ask for money for food, and spent additional money to clothe little Daquan to her satisfaction. She had no trouble hiding him from the social worker who called on her regularly to see the six other children living in her home, for whom she was certified.

*"I used my share of the peace dividend to get a divorce."*

A week after her son's return to Long Island, Crystal took up with a young Jamaican drug dealer named Troy, who was tall and husky and always wore dress pants, a silk shirt, and leather shoes—"like he was going somewhere," Crystal recalls. "Like he had a job on Wall Street. But no tie." She told all her friends she still hoped that Diamond would get a job and that someday they would be together, but added that she liked Troy better than the other men with whom she had been consorting. He was muscular, and he was tall: he reminded her of Diamond.

On Monday evening, July 23, 1990, the phone rang at the independent-living apartment. Crystal was in the shower—she had just come in from jogging with Troy—and threw a towel around herself and answered the phone. It was a friend of Benita's. She asked Crystal if she was sitting down, and said she had some bad news for her. While Crystal was thinking that this girl never called *her*, and was wondering what kind of bad news she could possibly have, and was trying to get her off the phone—she had to get dressed—Benita's friend told her that Diamond was dead. "Stop playing with me," Crystal said. Her voice started to crack when the girl told her where his death had occurred—at the intersection of Hempstead Avenue and Springfield Boulevard, not far from 107th Avenue. Crystal hung up, and called the group home, thinking that the child-care worker on duty would know if anything had happened to Diamond. The worker had heard nothing. Crystal and a friend took a cab to Hempstead and Springfield. A group of people, including one of Diamond's close friends, were standing outside a restaurant there. After painting the Ninja that morning, Diamond had gone to the restaurant that afternoon to buy his grandmother some food. As he was standing on the corner drinking a soda, eating chips, and talking to a drug dealer whom Crystal knew only as Duke, a man in a blue Mazda, who had quarrelled with Duke, pulled up and, while waiting at a stoplight outside the restaurant, sprayed bullets at both men. Duke was wounded. Diamond was killed.

When Crystal's social worker went to the apartment the next day, Crystal was distraught. She spoke of all the good times she had had with Diamond. When she was at the group home on Christmas Eve, she recalled, he had interrupted his drug dealing at eleven-fifty-nine to wish her a Merry Christmas, and he had done the same a week later, to wish her a Happy New Year. Even after they had split up, he went out to the Hargroves' by himself to see little Daquan. "I seen a future with him," Crystal said. The social worker held her, comforted her, and drove her to Diamond's mother's house so that she could pay her respects. The social worker also spent time with Crystal the following day. Crystal hadn't gone to work on Monday: Troy had rented a car for her, so that she could drive her girlfriends to a concert at Giants Stadium on Sunday. She and Troy had returned the car on Monday, then had brunch at a diner and made love at the house he had bought for his mother, near the independent-living house. She took the rest of the week off to attend Diamond's wake and funeral. Troy accompanied her to a store and chose and paid for a black-and-white hat for the funeral. She had told Troy about Diamond's taking her hundred and fifty dollars and spending it on a bike. "This is what happens to people who do wrong to you," Troy had said.

In September, Crystal reluctantly returned to the process of apartment hunting. She was reading the real-estate ads, as her social worker had taught her, and she observed that most of the listings were asking for "principals only." She asked the social worker why landlords wanted to rent only to school officials. The social worker explained that "principals only" meant "of urgent importance." (In a real-estate ad, "principals only" actually means that only the person who intends to rent the apartment—not an agent seeking to list it—should respond to the ad.) Crystal was amused by her own mistake. She apartment-hunted halfheartedly.

On Sunday, November 4, 1990, Crystal beeped Troy. She was with Charissa, a girl who lived diagonally across the street from the independent-living apartment. Charissa was friendly with one of Troy's brothers, and on the previous June 15th she had invited Crystal to Troy's birthday party; that was when Crystal had met and started dating him. Troy always behaved toward Crystal in what she felt was a considerate manner. He invited her "to be his company" when he drove his mother from Jamaica to a beauty salon in Brooklyn where she chose to have her hair done, and when he drove to downtown Brooklyn to buy fish for the barbecues held at his house. He took her to the movies after work, once taking along his daughter (who lived with him) and little Daquan, and he drove her out to the Hargroves' to return Daquan after a weekend visit. He gave her a hundred dollars for a leather jacket for little Daquan, asked what she wanted him to bring her from his trips to Florida, and spent most evenings with her: they went to restaurants and clubs, and went on a party-boat ride.

Troy, driving a jeep, pulled up in front of the independent-living apartment around six o'clock. Crystal was still standing outside Charissa's house. Another jeep pulled up in front of Troy's, and two young men got out. As Crystal crossed the street, she saw that one of the men was walking on the sidewalk toward her house. The other was walking in the same direction out in the street. His eyes met hers as they both approached the jeep. She said hello to Troy. The man walked past her, then turned around and, having apparently satisfied himself that the track was clear, pulled out a gun. As Crystal backed off, toward Charissa's, Troy and the gunman exchanged words. She heard a shot. The two men drove away. Troy tried to get out of his jeep but couldn't, managed to put it in gear, and drove it into a tree. Some men came out of nearby houses and tried to extricate him from the jeep. Crystal, in a panic, ran to Troy's house to find one of his brothers. By the time they got back to the scene of the shooting, police and an ambulance were there. Troy was still talking when the police arrived. By the time Crystal got to the hospital where he had been taken, he was dead. The police asked her to go to a nearby precinct and questioned her. She told them what she had seen. The next thing she remembers is waking up, heavily sedated, in a hospital in Queens. On Monday, two staff members from St. Christopher's picked her up at the hospital and drove her to the 107th Avenue group home. They were upset that she had been overmedicated and that she was being treated like a criminal. Crystal was still groggy and distraught on Tuesday. In the child-care worker's bedroom, she and Benita and Charissa talked about avenging Troy's death. On Wednesday, Crystal left the group home with Charissa. They bought a wig for Crystal to wear, so that she wouldn't be recognized by Troy's killers, if they were in the neighborhood, and went on to Troy's house.

"They saying you got Troy killed," Troy's brother Tony told her.

"Who saying that?" she asked.

"Troy's wife. You knew he was married, didn't you?"

"Excuse me. Troy was married?"

Crystal had no idea that Troy had a wife and two daughters, living in another house he owned. Her mood changed from grief to anger. "I felt dissed and cheated," she says. "Troy never gave me any suspicions he was married and had two daughters other than the one what lived with him, be-

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# LINES FOR A CIVIC STATUE

The President takes a ceremonial stroll
Among the sequoias. His mandate is euphoria:
The coin-calm lake at the end of history,
Golf lessons in the forsythia suburbs,
Xmas in the Poconos where Moses
Shall con the waters of their livid rainbow.

Tomorrow stands in a doorway watching his maker's
Body probe itself for a vein;
Narrowed intelligence of inchworm groping for footing—
Now is a place he's in but won't be soon.
He has inherited his estate in winter;
When the snow melts he'll find what fresh wonders await him.

Midnight evacuates the day—
A mighty city emptied of its people,
A mighty people cheated of its city;
Under the embers a brand-new adorable creature
Forges its feathers, builds its own beak of bronze,
Wrecking-yard talons strong to crush coachfuls of children.

Upturned the ship of freedom was an axe;
Men to much misery and hardship born
Learning mayhem as a child learns how to read,
In tentative steps, toiling at study:
"What are eyes for?" "Eyes are for blinding."
"Why do fingers crook?" "For the crooked trigger."

—James Lasdun

cause he always beeped me right back, we spent a night in his room at his mother's house, and he showed me off in front of all his friends. We were supposed to go to Jamaica together before Christmas. I didn't tell him I was living in an apartment paid for by the government, and I ain't ask him what he did when I wasn't with him."

Crystal, wearing the wig, went to Troy's wake early on Friday morning, before either the killers or members of the family were likely to be there. She had spent the night with Lonnie, a nineteen-year-old drug dealer who had been in prison. After Lonnie got out of prison, at the end of the summer, she had smoked reefer and had sex with him when she wasn't with Troy. Her fling with Lonnie was brief. "He acted childish, and I wasn't into babysitting," she says. If Charissa hadn't been present when Crystal learned that Troy was married, Crystal would have kept the news to herself, to avoid losing face with her wide circle of friends. On Monday, she went back to work.

*"Darling, when I'm with you I'm with you, but right now I'm with Louis Rukeyser."*

• •

CRYSTAL'S social workers had known for years about her involvement with drug dealers, and had taken note of the expensive gifts they gave her. She had more gold jewelry than any of the other girls in the group home, and wore chains with a big Nefertiti pendant, a Nefertiti ring, half a dozen other chains and rings, and large gold shell earrings. Though many items were stolen from her at the group home and in two unsolved burglaries at the independent-living apartment, in which she lost not only much of her jewelry but also her son's name bracelet, there was always someone new to replace the valuables. The deaths of Diamond and Troy within three and a half months made the agency nervous. Perhaps Crystal wasn't dealing drugs, but she was associating with drug dealers, and the shots were getting too close. It was time for her to leave St. Christopher's. When Crystal's social worker paid a surprise visit to her apartment in November and found roaches in the ashtrays and wine coolers in the refrigerator, Crystal was told to find an apartment of her own immediately.

On December 5, 1990, Crystal Taylor moved out of the independent-living apartment and into a studio apartment in the basement of a one-family house in Hollis, Queens, fifteen minutes away by car. She had been in St. Christopher's care for five years and eleven months. Her first post-foster-care apartment was small, dark, and drearily furnished. She had found it by buying a newspaper—Crystal has virtually no interest in the news and very rarely buys a paper—and scanning the real-estate ads. Lonnie had driven her around to look at apartments. The rent was five hundred and twenty-five dollars a month. The double bed sagged and smelled of mildew; water, not light, seeped into the place.

Crystal received a hundred-dollar discharge grant for clothing and a five-hundred-dollar discharge grant for furniture. She spent the five hundred dollars on a new double bed. She left St. Christopher's angry—she felt she had been hurried out instead of being allowed to stay until her twenty-first birthday, and she didn't like having to wait for her discharge grants until she produced receipts for her purchases—but she was also grateful. "If I hadn't been put in foster care, I'd have gone back to the Jeffersons'," she says. "Without the agency pushing me and keeping me thinking right, I'd have been a junior-high-school dropout. Me and Daquan would have had a couple of more kids before breaking up. I'd have stayed on drugs, and I'd probably be on welfare. I wouldn't be working for an advertising agency. I'd never have met Diamond. The staffs at St. Christopher's told me that if I had been fourteen in 1990 me and little Daquan would have gone home to the Jeffersons'. They say the system is getting more overloaded. My timing was right. Things happen for a reason. St. Christopher's gave me a second chance at life."

CRYSTAL enjoyed smoking reefer, drinking liquor, and entertaining her male companions in her new apartment, without social workers arriving unannounced and pointing out how many agency rules she had broken, but by January 1st she missed St. Christopher's subsidies. She had previously been able to spend her take-home pay—about three hundred and twenty dollars every two weeks, without overtime—on additions to her stylish wardrobe. In the fall of 1990, she had cheerfully gone shopping after work, buying silk blouses, pricing Louis Vuitton wallets, putting leather jackets on layaway. After December, her earnings scarcely covered her rent, her phone bill, and her beeper bill. "I'm not shopping, that's the sadness in my life," she observed to a friend. "There's nothing like having something else."

On January 15th, Crystal received an upsetting piece of news. Little Daquan had told his teacher that Mrs. Hargrove hit him in the face with a stick. Crystal had visited her son regularly while he was in the Bronx but had slacked off after his return to the Hargroves', because she knew he was safe there, and because she was too busy running around with Troy and Jimbo and Star—other drug dealers she was seeing. Daquan Jefferson had not been visiting his son much, either. Crystal knew that Mrs. Hargrove might "chastise" Daquan but would never hit him. Since Mrs. Hargrove had all the foster children and adopted children she was certified to have, she felt she could not jeopardize her situation as a foster parent, so she told Crystal to please fetch little Daquan in three days. Crystal believed that her son's lie was his way of getting his parents to pay some attention to him. In January of 1991, Daquan, six, went back to the Bronx to live with his father, his grandmother, and his teen-age cousins—the children of one of Daquan's brothers, who had used drugs and died of pneumonia.

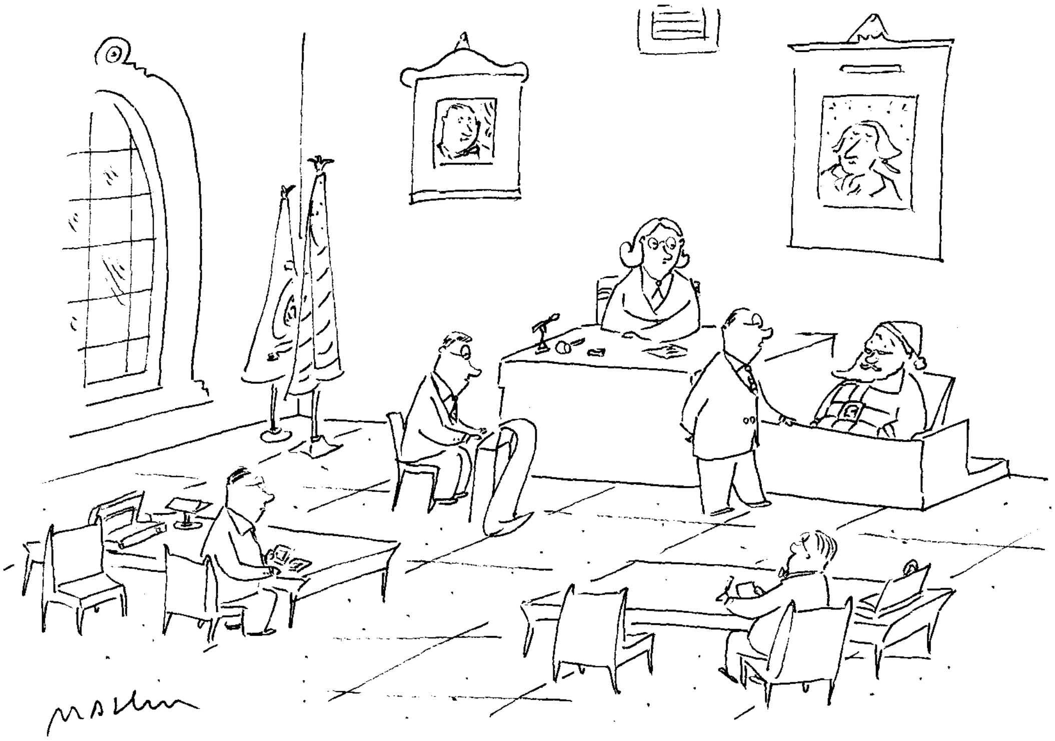
IN January, a week after her birthday, Crystal was introduced to Tarrant, a thirty-nine-year-old Bahamian who owned a grocery store in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn, by an acquaintance who had once worked part time for him, off the books. Tarrant was busy in his store Mondays through Saturdays from about 10 A.M. to 2 or 3 A.M. and netted about a thousand dollars a week. He sold everything—bread and condoms, cigarettes and beer, milk and envelopes (three cents apiece). He smoked reefer, but he didn't drink much and didn't sell drugs. "He was too scared," Crystal says. She wasn't taken by his looks. He had plain features and "he always needed a decent haircut and a shave." His clothes were custom-made but unstylish; to Crystal it seemed that he could be mistaken for "a bum on a train." She was attracted to Tarrant by what his money could buy her. He gave her a VCR two weeks after they met, as a belated twenty-first-birthday present. He bought her a heater for her dank apartment, gave her a hundred dollars here and two hundred dollars there to have her hair done, to buy a dress, to pay some of her bills. He gave her groceries.

Crystal was not physically attracted to Tarrant, and for a few weeks she fended him off by saying she wasn't sexually active. When she finally had to go to bed with him, she got herself "really cheebered up" on marijuana beforehand. She knew she had to spend Sundays with him, when the store was closed, and although he was considerate—on his birthday, he took her to City Island to eat lobster, her favorite food—Crystal found him boring. He asked too many questions about things that she thought were self-evident. He called her at ten-thirty one night to ask her what she was doing. She said, "Getting ready to go to sleep. What the fuck do you think I'm doing? I have to be up at 4:30 A.M. to get ready for work." Tarrant bored Crystal more after he was robbed at gunpoint in his store one night in May. He lost about thirty-five hundred dollars and had less money to spend on her. When he didn't give her a television set that he had promised her as a Mother's Day present, she told him, "Mother's Day comes just once a year." When he answered, "I'm backed up on my bills," she said, "That sounds personal. I don't got nothing to do with that. Just give me mine." She did entertain a few doubts about using him. "If you go to bed with a man for money and not pleasure, it's not good for the other part of you," she says. Crystal got the TV set from Tarrant and started dating Stanley, a young man who had no money but was more fun to be with—for a while. Then she started seeing Glenn, a young man who sold drugs on her block, where one house stood out for what it was—a crack house, to and from which dealers roared in their cars and on motorcycles day and night.

KEYS
KEYS MADE

IN July of 1991, Crystal contemplated a relaxing summer. Little Daquan was going to Savannah, Georgia, to stay with some of his father's relatives from early July until mid-August; she wouldn't have to make the trek to the Bronx for six weeks. Tarrant was going home to Nassau to visit his family for the first two weeks of August. She would be free to watch her twenty-five-inch Sharp TV with stereo, and be cooled by a fan Tarrant had recently provided, with Herb, a van driver she had met while riding with him as a passenger, or with Cyril, a subway-maintenance man she had met at a subway station, or with Glenn, who had "put some zest back in my life."

Before Tarrant flew to Nassau, on August 1st, he gave Crystal five hundred and seventy-five dollars. Some of it was designated for little Daquan's return train fare from Savannah and some for her telephone and credit-card bills. Tarrant had also told Crystal to use some of the money for a deposit at the Jack La Lanne Health Spa near her office (she wanted to improve her stomach muscles), and said that after his return he would give her the money for the monthly fee. While Tarrant was away, she went to Jack La Lanne twice after work. She got more exercise in bed. Over Friday and Saturday one week, she



*"Let me refresh your memory. It was the night before Christmas and all through the house not a creature was stirring until you landed a sled, drawn by reindeer, on the plaintiff's home, causing extensive damage to the roof and chimney."*

had to change her satin sheets (another gift from Tarrant) twice. By the time Tarrant returned, she was through with Cyril ("He treated me like a common slut") and Herb ("He was too childish") and was angry with Glenn, who had dropped out of sight a few days earlier.

By late August, Crystal was neglecting Tarrant for Marcel, an outside messenger she had met at work. "I never really knew what to say to Tarrant," she says. "Marcel had no money, but I could be myself with him. We'd walk down Lexington Avenue and I'd laugh so hard the bones in my cheeks used to hurt, and he'd be laughing, too."

On Sunday, September 8, 1991, at about 3 A.M., Crystal returned to Queens from the Bronx, where she had been shopping for school clothes for little Daquan and hanging out in a park with Marcel. As she and Marcel approached her apartment, she spotted Tarrant's van parked outside and told Marcel to turn around and go back up the block. Tarrant didn't see him, but he started to argue with her. She told him she was going into the house. He got out of the van and stormed into the apartment behind her. She took her sneakers off, and he kept arguing with her. "I'm getting out of here," she said, and bent down to put her sneakers back on. "You ain't leaving out of here," Tarrant said. "You don't love me, and I don't have nothing to live for right now. I might as well take you and me together." As she was putting on her second sneaker, she heard four clicks. She looked up and saw a 9-mm. pistol pointed at her head. It had malfunctioned. Tarrant set the gun down on the table, quickly pulled a smaller pistol out of his pocket—a .22-calibre—and aimed it at her head. Before he pulled the trigger, Crystal put her left hand up to her head—a reflex action. The smaller pistol was working—Crystal heard a loud *pow* and felt something strike her left hand. Tarrant got ready to pull the trigger again. Crystal grabbed him and cried, "Please don't, please don't!" He told her, "I got to kill you, because I shot you and you'll tell the police," and he kept the gun pointed at her.

Crystal apologized for having hurt Tarrant—she hadn't telephoned him when he beeped her, she had pulled a pillow over her head when they were in bed. She said, "I love you, I love you, and let me show you something I just got for you." She had bought Tarrant a card, and she took it out of her pocketbook. The words printed on the card were "I'm sorry for all the pain I've caused you." Tarrant read it while still holding the .22-calibre pistol in his hand.

"I won't go to jail," he said.

"I won't tell on you," she answered. "I'll go to the pay phone up the street and tell the police I got robbed."

Crystal walked out of the apartment toward the pay phone. Tarrant followed her in the van and parked it in front of another building. She called the police, and Tarrant drove away. When they arrived, she said she had been on her way home from a girlfriend's house and two men had jumped her in the street. The police drove her to North Shore Hospital, on Long Island. Her reflex action probably saved her life. The bullet had lodged in a bone of her hand.

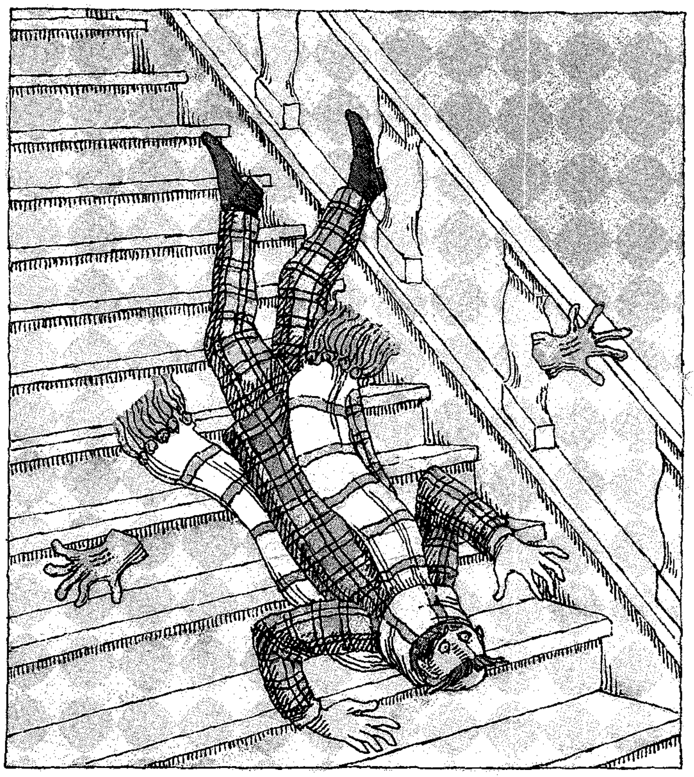
A surgeon operated on her hand on Sunday. Crystal spent the night in the hospital and was discharged on Monday. Her left hand was in a cast, and she couldn't do much for herself. She was also afraid to return to her apartment. A year earlier, shortly before Crystal settled into her basement studio in Hollis, Florence Drummond had moved into the first apartment she had had since 1982, when she was evicted from the sixth-floor walkup on Sheridan Avenue. During the past year, Crystal and Florence had seen each other often and had become good friends. They went to clubs together. Florence went to Tarrant's store to keep Crystal company during the one or two evenings a week that Tarrant expected her to be there to keep him company. A drug-rehabilitation program that Florence completed in 1990 had given her a second chance at life—a second chance to be a mother to her children. On Monday, September 9, 1991, Crystal left the hospital and went to live in Florence's apartment. It felt good to her to be going home. ♦

*(This is the first part of a two-part article.)*

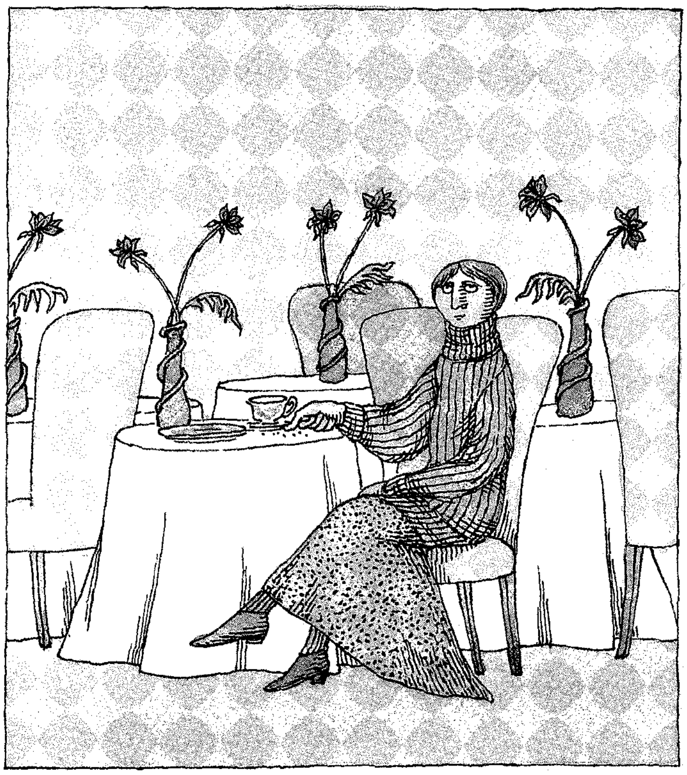
Edward Gorey

# VERSE ADVICE

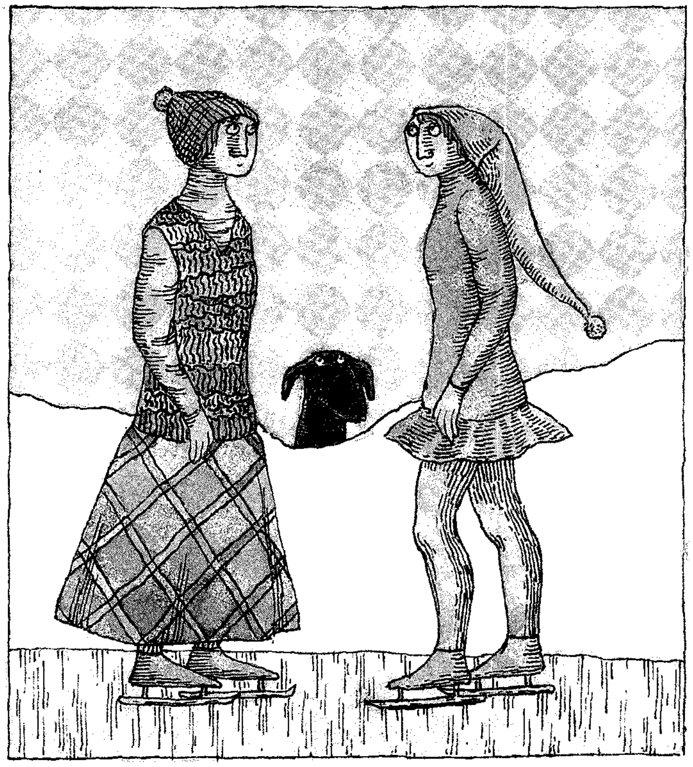
*Some things you ought, perhaps, to hear*
*Before you start the brand-new year.*



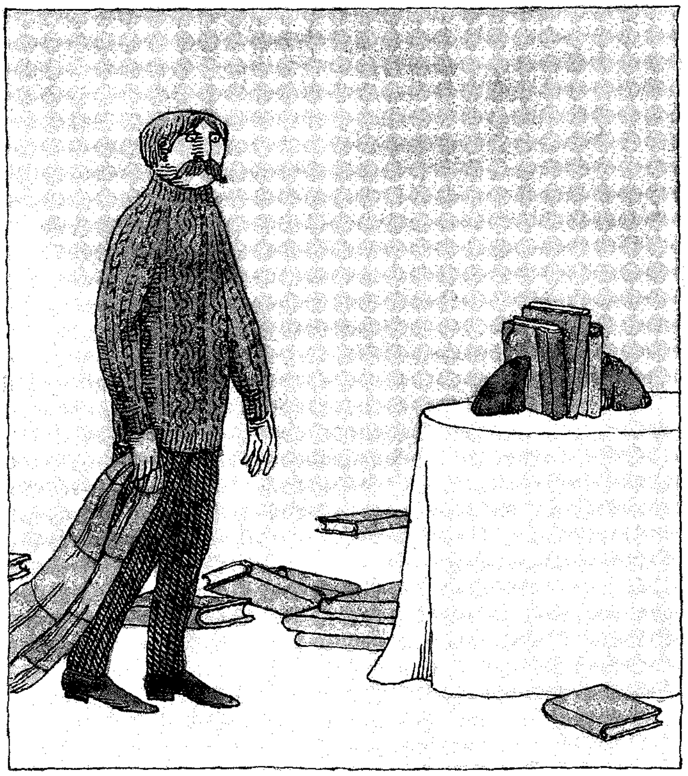
*The one who wants to put on airs*
*Should not attempt them on the stairs.*



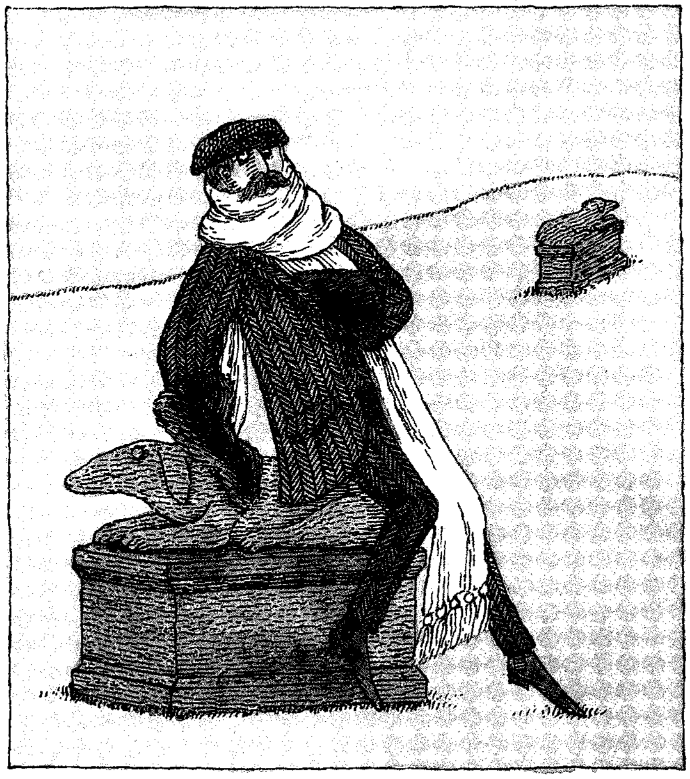
*It's possible to pick up crumbs*
*By pressing on them with the thumbs.*



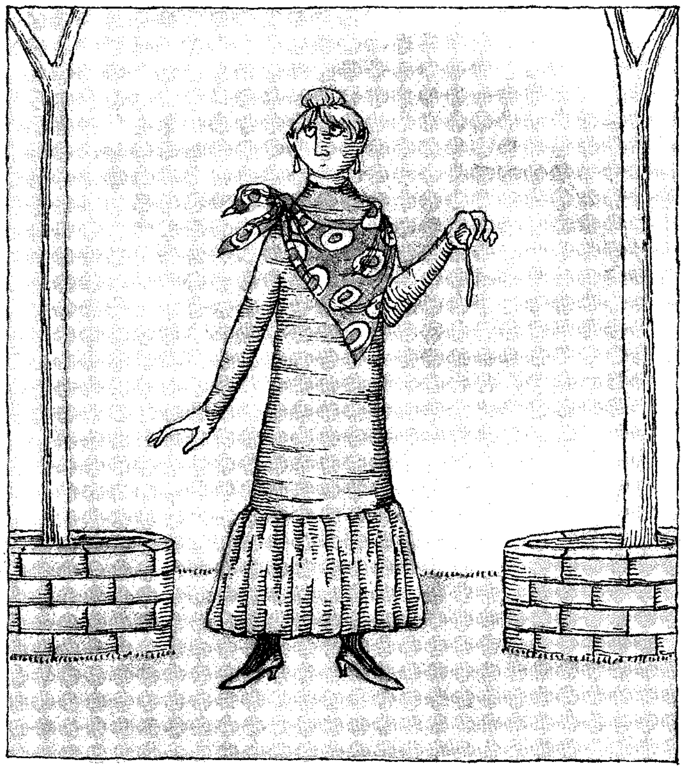
*The person who today is here*
*May by tomorrow disappear.*



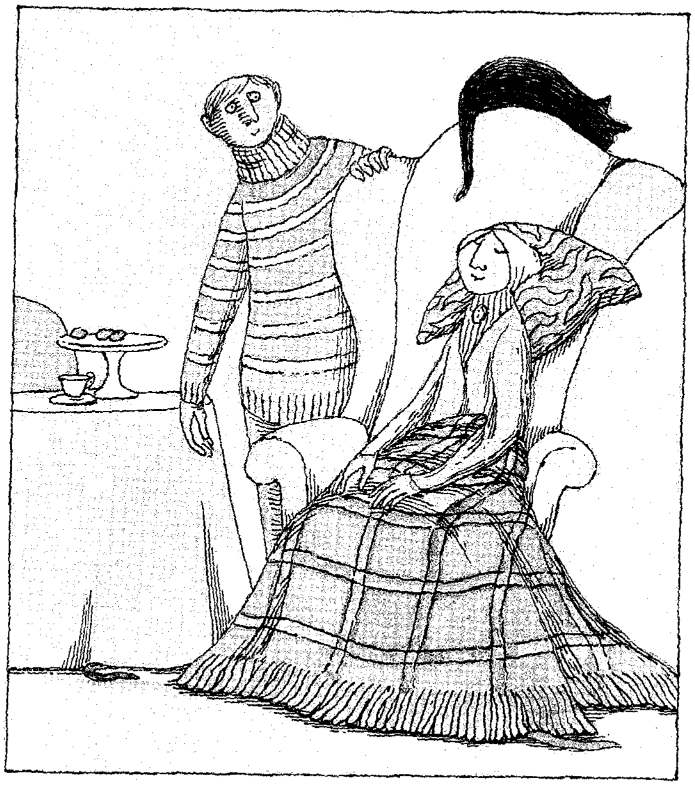
The helpful thought for which you look
Is written somewhere in a book.



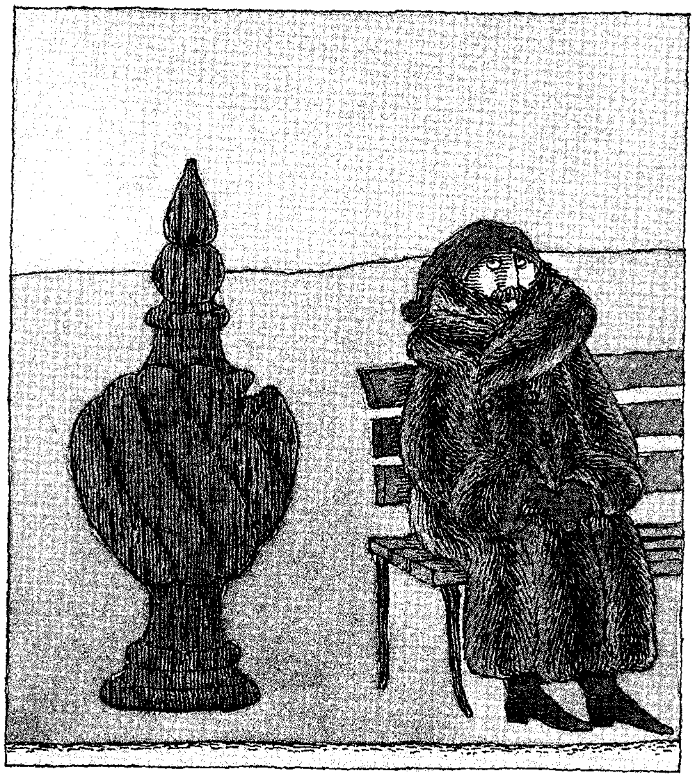
Upon your person keep a pill
In case you're taken deathly ill.



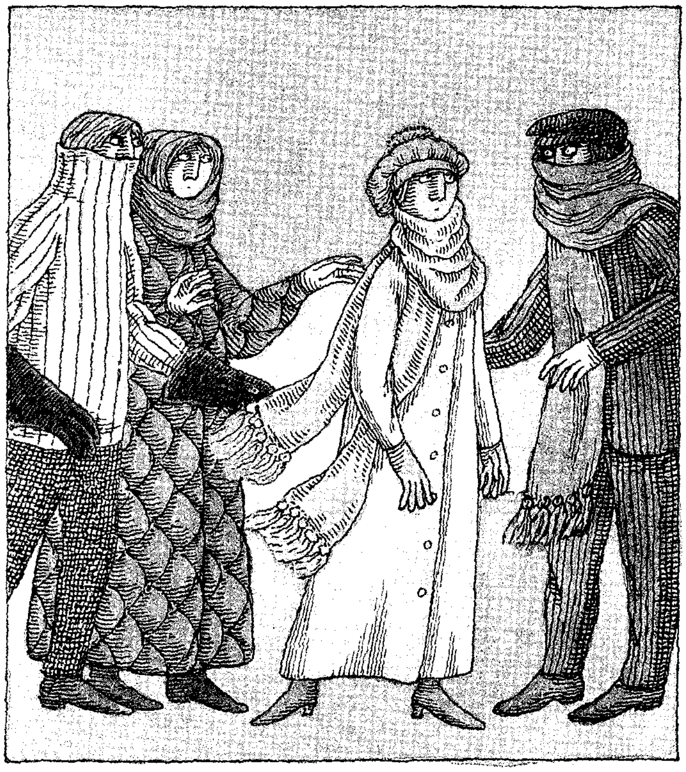
A one- or two-inch piece of string
Cannot be used for anything.



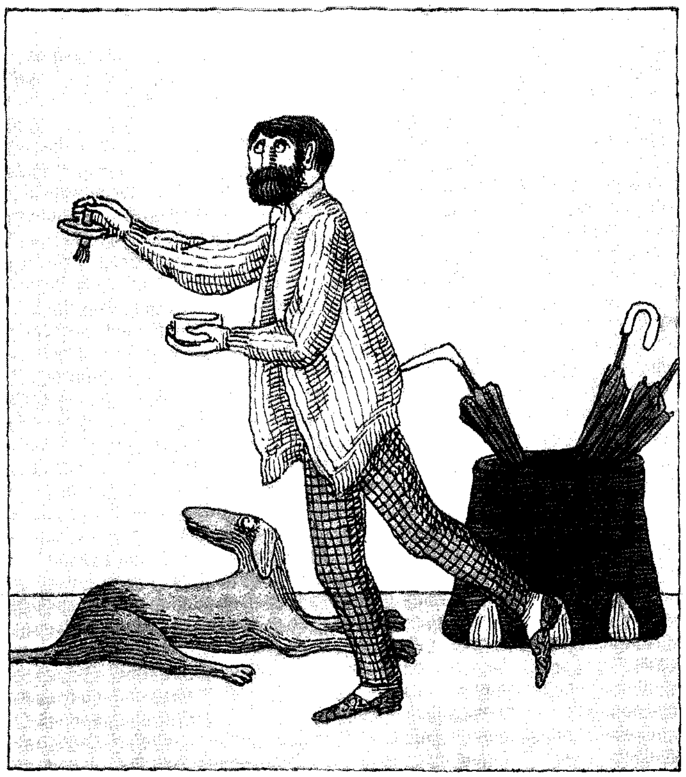
*It's well we cannot hear the screams*
*That we create in others' dreams.*



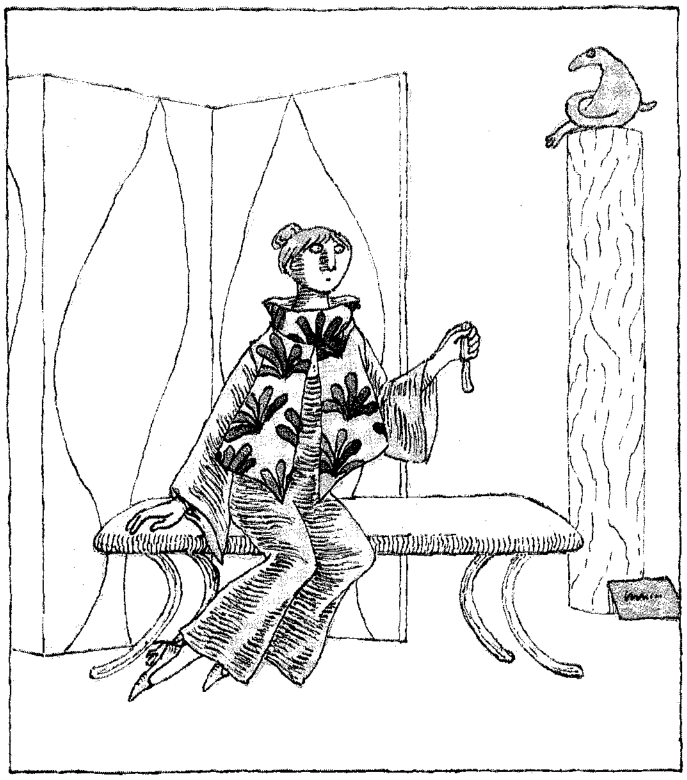
*At twilight, objects often start*
*To make odd sounds and fall apart.*



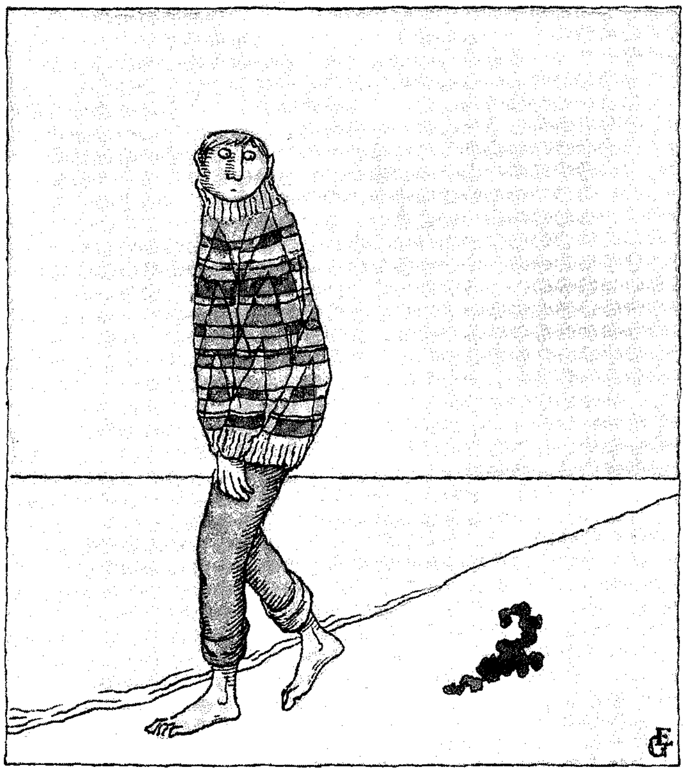
*A random thought, if said aloud,*
*May soon attract a hostile crowd.*



A timely use of glue or paste
May well prevent a shocking waste.



One cannot hope to end one's life
With nothing but a butter knife.



The seaweed on the shore cries out,
But only it knows what about.

CASUAL

# MY GENERATION

*by Andrew Bergman*

(*This rough draft of the Clinton Inaugural Address has been tested in three major markets over the past four weeks, and scored in the ninetieth percentile—higher than Eisenhower's Farewell Address, Thomas Eagleton's Withdrawal Speech, and Nixon's Third Inaugural Address, which, of course, was never used.*)

MR. PRESIDENT . . . and say, how about a nice round of applause for George and Barbara Bush? Put your hands together.

(*Pause for swelling applause; bite lip.*)

There've been many occasions over the past four years when the President and Mrs. Bush have made us proud to be Americans, but nothing has become their occupancy of the White House more than their leaving it. I've been all over this great country in the ten weeks since the election—on the beaches of Southern California, on the great soundstages of our nation's film and television studios, in the fast-food restaurants that bind our national alimentary canal together, and everywhere I go people have said, "Tell George Bush he hasn't left the White House in disgrace. He's left a winner." We're all winners today.

(*Nod toward Bush; gesture for him to rise; if he rises, applaud along with everyone else; if he does not rise, make no effort to force him to rise.*)

Mr. President and Mr. Vice-President, Vice-President Gore, Mr. Chief Justice, members of Congress, Larry King, Oprah Winfrey, Montel Williams, Regis and Kathie Lee, members of the assembled press corps, and you, the American people. Welcome. Welcome to your country.

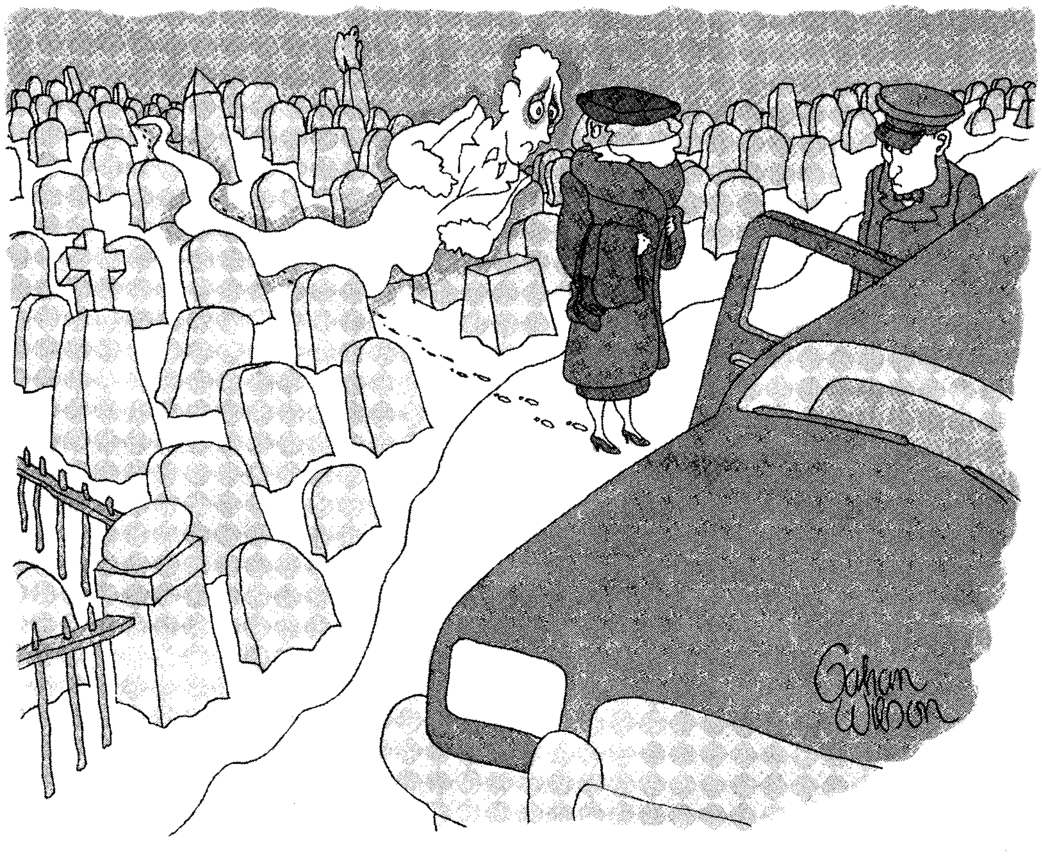
(*Hold arms outstretched.*)

Today, a new generation of Americans takes command, tested by the fires of hallucinogenic drugs and street demonstrations, nursed on the soothing milk of television and rock and roll. Where the common intellectual currency of our forefathers was Thoreau and Emerson and Whitman, our generation grew up on the words of Ricky Ricardo, Ed Norton, Fred and Ethel Mertz, Uncle Fester, and the old lonesome stranger himself, George Gobel. We were intellectually challenged by "The $64,000 Question" and "I've Got a Secret," and we learned about loyalty from a dog named Lassie. Robert Young and Ozzie Nelson taught us to be fathers, Jane Wyatt and Harriet Nelson taught us to be mothers, and was there ever a better daughter than My Little Margie? I don't think so.

(*Acknowledge applause; don't bite lip.*)

That was an ideal America, a world of picket fences, and friendly neighbors like Thorny, and tossing the football around on Saturday afternoon and hoping you didn't throw it through Mr. Wilson's window. That was a world where Our Miss Brooks and Mr. Boynton were your teachers, and there was no way those good people were handing out condoms to Walter Denton, or to My Friend Irma, or to Meet Millie. No way, no day.

But today we live in a more troubled America. I acknowledge that. As I take office on this chilly and historic January twentieth, I wish I could promise you four carefree years. I cannot. Three decades ago, as we all cruised the town square in our Bel Airs, the man we call the King, Elvis Aron Presley, told us that he was "itchin' like a man on a fuzzy tree." Elvis asked, "What's wrong with me?" The answer: he was "all



"*It's over, Harry!*"

shook up." Today, I am that man. Today I am truly "all shook up."

(*Applause and laughter.*)

We are all "all shook up." That's what makes us Americans. Other countries rest on their laurels; we probe restlessly forward. In the next decades, we must transform ourselves and return to our sense of community and shared values. Today, I summon you, as Martha and the Vandellas did a quarter century ago: "This is an invitation across the nation. A chance for folks to meet. Come on boys, come on girls, everywhere around the world."

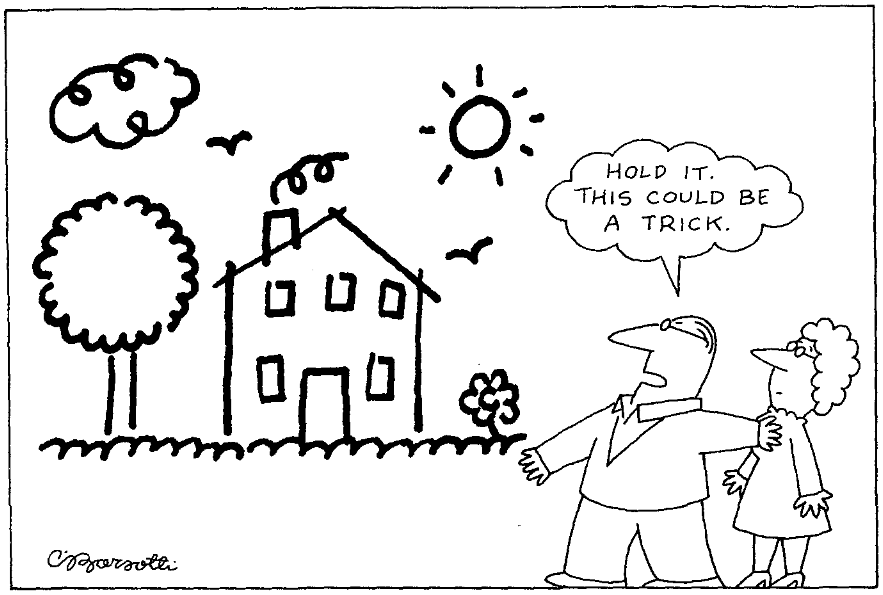
(*Tremendous applause.*)

The Boss, Bruce Springsteen, recently told us that these are "Better Days." I agree. Despite the ills of urban blight and homelessness, slow productivity growth, and schools that rank between those of Turkey and Chad, I believe, with Bob Dylan, that "any day now, we shall be released." Released into a world of social justice, equal pay for equal work. This is no longer, as James Brown told us, "a man's world." Hunh. Ha' mercy. No, we live in a world where both sexes share the burdens of work and child rearing. Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons informed us that "big girls don't cry." Well, they do, and so do big men.

(*Dab at eyes.*)

Our world is going through a cataclysmic transition. We all remember the words of Buddy Miles, "Oh, my mind is going through them changes; I think I'm going out of my mind." What better way to describe and chart the current evolution of Central and Eastern Europe. Many nations have awakened from the deep sleep of Communism; upon opening their eyes, they have looked around and asked, "Are the Jews still here? Are the Muslims still around? What about those Armenians?" Yes, ancient hatreds are slow to die. Dionne Warwick and Burt Bacharach were right, "What the world needs now is love, sweet love." The question remains: What is America's role? How do we retain moral leadership without committing armed forces, without sending our finest young men and women to fight other people's battles? War, Edwin Starr reminds us, "Huh! What is it good for? Absolutely nothing." But force may be necessary to right tragic wrongs. We must use force with prudence, but we also must exercise prudence with force. Yes, little has changed since the Temptations described this world as a "Ball of Confusion."

And little has changed since the Silhouettes exhorted every one of us to "dipdipdipdipdipdipdipdip get a job." A good job for good pay. I will announce Operation Silhouette tomorrow at noon—the construction of high-speed rail at high-rail speed. It will dipdipdipdip create a hundred thousand new jobs. But government can only assist. The engine of this economy must, and will, be private initiative, Americans unafraid to dream, to roll up their sleeves and begin a new enterprise. Thirty-five years ago, Ralph Kramden came home and tasted a delicious appetizer that his wife, Alice, had left on the kitchen table. He went to his boss, Mr. Marshall of the bus company, and he told him, "Mr. Marshall, my wife, Alice, has made the most delicious appetizer you ever tasted. People go nuts for these appetizers." Mr. Marshall took a bite, and he nodded. "Very good," he said. "Very good?" said Ralph, with his customary optimism. "This is going to be a riot!" Mr. Marshall was about to lend Ralph the money for Kram-Mar's Delicious Mystery Appetizer. Then Mr. Marshall called in some of the other executives of the bus company to taste this appetizer, and it turned out to be nothing but dog food, and Ralph fainted dead away in Mr. Marshall's office. But it was the dream that counted.


HOLD IT. THIS COULD BE A TRICK.
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We can restore that dream. Paul Simon recently asked that we all "be received in Graceland." I believe we will be received there, and I am here to lead. I am not going to settle down; in fact, I'm the kind of guy who goes from town to town. Just call me the Wanderer. And yes, like the Wanderer, I will go around and around and around and around, until our national business is finished. It won't be finished in a hundred days or a thousand days, but hey, as brother Marvin Gaye put it, "Let's get it on." So the work begins. People have predicted that I would talk for hours. I won't. I'd like to, but I won't.

(*Acknowledge laughter.*)

But before I go, there is one question that I have to ask and that is . . . that is . . .

(*Pause.*)

and that is . . .

(*Cup ear as crowd shouts "What?"*)

"Do you love me? Do you love me? Do you loo-ove me, do you love me? Do you love me—now that I can da-a-ance! Watch me now! I can mash potato, I can do the twist. Tell me, baby, do you like it like this?"

(*Begin dancing with Hillary. Vice-President Gore to dance with Tipper. Urge George and Barbara to join in. Jay and the Americans step to the rostrum.*) ♦

FICTION

# BANK HOLIDAY

*by Jonathan Wilson*

We take the 226 bus from Dollis Hill to Golders Green Station. Along the way the houses expand and beautify. Then we hop on the single-decker 210 to Hampstead Heath. Dennis asks me, "How many ears has Davy Crockett got?" I shake my head. "Three," he says. "His left ear, his right ear, and his wild front ear." As soon as we're off the bus we cross the no man's land near the Whitestone Pond and enter the wild frontier of the Heath. No fooling around with the coconut shy, the penny roll, or even the bumper cars. We head straight for the Rat Woman. It is August, 1967, and you can still catch a freak show at the funfair.

At the entrance to the tent stands a throwback to the previous decade, a pointy-faced, vicious spiv, hair slicked back, Teddy-boy jacket, black drainpipe jeans, winkle-picker Chelsea boots covered in mud. He wants half a crown from each of us. Dennis says, "Who are you—the Rat *Man*?" El Spivo doesn't like this. He mentions something about slicing our fucking noses off. Dennis is extremely tough, so it's O.K. to laugh in his face and enter the tent.

It's very hot under the canvas, and there's a pungent odor coming from the cage. At first we can't see her, because there's a whole crowd of men (and a few women) standing in front of us, trying to get a look. O.K., here she is, lying stretched out in this brown wire thing that looks as though it's been put together from old fire guards. "What? Not even tits?" says an old geezer next to us, to no one in particular. "Shut your *fucking* mouth," the Rat Woman replies from her supine position.

She's in a full-body leotard: the top half is sheer, with tufts of brown hair glued over her nipples. The bottom is fake rat skin with a long tail attached. She has narrow, sharp-looking, protruding front teeth, which may have got her the job in the first place. It's not the tail that gets me, or the brown and white rats crawling all over her, as if she were in a sewer—it's her long, brown, varnished, witchy nails. "Imagine being scratched by those," I say to Dennis, nudging him and pointing.

"Nasty," Dennis replies.

We're up close now, with our faces almost pressed against the wire. I feel some bastard trying to pick my back pocket, but as there's nothing in it, he's going to be out of luck. "Can I *do* something for you gentlemen?" asks the Rat Woman, giving a heavy stare and daring us to linger.

"Bite their balls off," yells some loudmouth from the back of the crowd.

I say to the Rat Woman, "Want some cheese?"

"I'll give you cheese," she screams. "I'll give you fucking cheese."

Before I can get out of the way she scoops up a handful of rat shit and sawdust and throws it through the cage at my face. I try to duck but get caught behind the ear. I can feel little pellets in my hair.

We get down on our hands and knees and crawl to the side of the tent. Some kid is lying there, trying to saw through one of the guy ropes with a tiny penknife. "What are you doing?" Dennis asks him, stupidly.

The kid jabs the knife at us. "Watch it," I say. (He's very small.)

We roll out of the fetid tent and into some muddy caravan ruts. Behind our heads the generator for the merry-go-round is giving off a high-pitched whine, as if it's going to explode. "*Fun*fair—they call this a *fun*fair," says Dennis.

"Well," I reply, "aren't you having fun?"

We scramble down the Heath to the lower part of the fair. Outside the Big Wheel, we bump into beautiful Pat McNally from our school, and her new boyfriend. "This is Lemberg," she says in her Wembley whine. "He's an artist."

Dennis looks at me. I know what he's thinking. Pat's last boyfriend, Slim, was a consummate mod: scooter, parka, big Who fan, the whole thing. But he's dead. Done in by the Chinese heroin that blew through our school last year like a fat death wind. This guy, Lemberg, looks like a poor substitute for Slim. "Wanna see his studio?" Pat asks us. She doesn't bother to tell him our names.

We stand in front of this huge canvas that is a portrait of naked Lemberg, giant size, thick brushes in his hand, long thick tube of a penis hanging down. A black scrawl in the bottom-right-hand corner of the painting reads "Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead." Lemberg sits at a table in the middle of his studio, rolling a joint. He's about thirty, maybe thirty-five. "What's this, then?" says Dennis, pointing at the penis. "You've been using your imagination a little, haven't you?"

"Oh no," says Pat, matter-of-factly, "he does have a big one. Don't you?" Lemberg doesn't respond. He keeps sorting through his bag of grass. He's humming a little song to himself, like Winnie-the-Pooh:

What you don't need
stalks and seeds.

We respect almost anything Pat says (1) because of her recent bereavement, and (2) because she knows Twiggy. I have a third reason for respecting her. For some months she has been the object of all my fantasies, in most of which she is naked and hard at work.

Dennis starts to wander around the studio, picking up tubes of paint and squeezing blobs of color onto his hands. Then he wipes them on his jeans. "Look," he says, pointing at his trousers. "Art."

It seems all right to be thirty-five and an artist in trendy Hampstead. You get a big bed in the middle of an open space (it's rumpled, and a not-so-small patch of dry brown blood is on the undersheet), and this gorgeous sixteen-year-old girl whom we're all, me especially, dying for, and you get to paint yourself naked. "Leave the paint alone," says Lemberg. Ah, he speaks. And what do you know? He's one of us. He's from our part of town. So there's not a lot we can do now, because he knows who we are, and we know who he is. That's all it takes in London, really—someone opening his mouth.

We smoke the dope. "This is homegrown," says Lemberg.

"You should see his setup," Pat adds. "There's a whole little room covered in tinfoil, with studio lights he got from a closed-down theatre."

"Ever try hash oil?" asks Lemberg. "This is coated in hash oil. Makes for a trippy experience."

"What?" Dennis asks. "Are you telling me we can expect to hallucinate?"

"What you expect and what you get may turn out to be two different things entirely."

"Very meaningful," Dennis replies.

After about ten minutes Dennis says to me, "It's big-socks time." He's referring to that moment when the dope effects start to creep into your knees, then down toward your calves, where they irritate the area just above where the sock line would be if you were wearing big socks. Lemberg has moved over to Pat and is trying to kiss her. She keeps pushing his face away, but only in a kind of "Just wait until they've gone" way. We go.

Outside, I look at the normally invisible hairs on the back of my hand and see a waving cornfield. "That's a hash-oil magnification you're experiencing," says Dennis when I describe what's going on. "Your powers of perception have been heightened."

Soon after, I have this idea about running up an Israeli flag on our school flagpole. I use my sharpened powers to imagine a huge blue-on-white Star of David whipping in the wind over Brondesbury, and Queens Park and Paddington. Last week, Owen (Religious Instruction) beat me badly with the "kosher cosh" for talking in class. I have a deeper grudge against Beaglehole for humiliating me during gym. I was wearing red shorts instead of the regulation black. "Wolfson," he said, "this isn't a Jewish fashion show." This kind of thing ("Cohen, stand in the wastepaper bin—you're rubbish") goes on all the time in our school, which mingles semi-intelligent sociopaths from Kilburn with recidivist Jewish kids from Willesden and Wembley.

The question is: Where to get the flag? Dennis, who has an agile but generally impractical mind, immediately suggests that we steal one. But where from? We stand outside a house with a blue plaque, where John Keats lived two hundred years ago. Dennis says, "When was the last time you saw an Israeli flag? I mean one within graspable distance."

I totter around on some blurry edge in my mind. I know where I'm going, but I don't quite want to get there. Eventually, I say, "In synagogue, when your cousin Norman was bar mitzvahed. Don't you remember? They unfurled it behind him when he got his J.N.F. trees."

"WHAT'S the problem?" Dennis yells up, in what he thinks is a whisper. I'm lying, like a fish on a platter, on one half of a huge hexagonal stained-glass window that we have managed to push open with a pole. I've scaled the concrete wall, and the friable paint job is all over my hands and clothes. My face is up against the mane of a tawny Lion of Judah. The glass, bonded in metal, feels like it's going to shatter at any minute. Meanwhile, I'm tipping forward but can't slide through. I'm thinking about the fulcrum, and how poorly I did in Physics—"26% (Highest in Form 97%); Diligence C; Comments: Lazy and incompetent"—when suddenly I'm head first on the padded seats of the temple.

Someone has been here before us. The whole place is a mess. There are prayer books with pages torn out and strewn all over the place, and ripped prayer shawls on the floor. One of the red velvet curtains in front of the ark has been slashed, as have the puffy seats where the synagogue wardens sit in their shiny top hats and tails.

I let Dennis in through a side door. He looks around. "Someone's been enjoying themselves," he says. "Any sign of the flag?"

Even I am appalled by his insouciance. "This is a serious thing," I say.

We take a quick tour. It's mostly

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slashing and ripping. There is one piece of nasty art work—a black swastika on one of the side walls—but it looks as if they ran out of paint. It occurs to us both, at about the same time, that if anyone were to come in now we would have a lot of explaining to do.

We're on our way out (sans flag) when we hear the noise. It seems to be coming from the pipes in the organ loft. It's a tenebrous, adult-male groaning. When we get up there, we find the janitor. His face is blotchy and bruised; there's a crescent of half-dried blood under each of his nostrils. "I tried to stop 'em," he says. "Those bastards. They come in out of the park. What do they want to do a thing like this for?"

Dennis looks around—he's developing a volcanic glow in his eyes. I've seen it before; it merges anger and impatience, and is sometimes a prelude to violence.

"Do you know where the flag is?" he asks.

"Who cares about the fucking flag?" I say, and for a moment it looks as if the two of us might get into a fight (not good for me).

For a while, the janitor and I try to clear up the mess. Dennis goes into the back office to look for the flag. I stuff a lot of the torn pages under someone's seat. Then I get fed up, and I sit down and start reading. "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread." What piece of bread? I try to think about Pat McNally's eyelids, but they're impossible to visualize. Eyebrows, yes—average thickness, blond. A guide to her pubic hair? Could be.

The janitor says he's going to phone the police. Dennis appears with the flag (not quite as big as I'd hoped). He's already attached it to its staff. I ask the janitor, "Mind if we borrow this for a while?"

He shrugs, as if to say "Makes no difference now."

Beyond the synagogue are the open fields of Gladstone Park. We unfurl the flag and run with it streaming behind us like a medieval banner. A couple of stray dogs chase us for a while. Dennis sends them off by aiming kicks toward their faces. Kids are on the swings, and forming lines up by the stone fountain. In the distance, past the muddy duck pond, a rainbow arches over the weeping willows and the high, thin branches of the silver birches. It must have rained while we were inside. A small girl comes up to us. She says, "I know how doggies talk." She gives a few yelps, then a growl, followed by a heavy bark.

Outside Electric House, on Willesden Lane, we wait a long time for a bus. Then they don't want to let us on with the flag. There's an inspector on board. "Suppose we stop suddenly," he says. "You could lance that right through someone's lungs."

The conductor adds, "More like driving a stake through a person's heart."

Dennis says, "Or sticking a javelin up your arse."

We walk.

On the way I try to get Dennis to talk about something that matters. What I want to get at is this: Why would an attractive sixteen-year-old girl give herself over—body and possibly soul—to someone like Lemberg? Now, from Lemberg's point of view it's all very clear—he wants to crush her bones. But from Pat's?

Of course, I have this special interest. In the immediate post-Slim mourning period ("Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead") I had one slow dance with Pat at the Starlite Ballroom, Greenford. She wore a black miniskirt with a semi-transparent pink blouse that revealed something she told me was called a "no-bra bra." Her body's imprint lasted all night, as if I were sand.

When I broach the subject with Dennis I quickly discover that he has no interest in the whys and wherefores of anything. He is all business and to the point. The solid rope of dailiness is what he likes to climb. If I were to say now, as I feel like saying, "I'm losing my enthusiasm for this flag adventure, because the day has already served up more than I can digest," he would turn on me.

Once, Dennis brought an axe to school. During lunch break he chopped up his desk. At first, I thought this was a familiar, if extreme, assault upon the seat of learning. Then I realized he was trying to break the frozen sea within him. We stuffed the splintered wood in our gym bags and took the afternoon off to ride the tube. As we came to the semi-deserted stations at the northern end of the old Bakerloo line, Kingsbury, Queensbury, and Canons Park, we waited until the doors were about to close, then threw the wood onto the rails.

But is this what I really want? Vandalism and adventure? All summer I have been carrying around the possibilities for change, for shifting my allegiances. They rise and fall, like unexpected adolescent erections, and, appropriately, converge on issues of hardness and softness. I am awed by the former, embodied in Dennis, but generally inclined by temperament and character, toward the latter. Somewhere inside I want to surround a girl—well, Pat McNally—with the most insipid and conventional accoutrements of love.

Now, don't get me wrong—I had seen the brown-red stain on Lemberg's bed, and I knew all about the body's betrayals. What is more, almost my entire education in the sex area derived from dirty jokes, poorly photographed barbershop magazines, and badly drawn graffiti. The previous year, in order to counterbalance my developing vulgarity, my father had dragged me, one Friday night, to a small Sephardic synagogue in London's East End. He wanted me to hear a group of old men chant the Song of Songs—or Canticle of Canticles, as it was called in the prayer book. (I read this, of course, as "Testicle of Testicles.") But even though I had listened and learned about the little foxes, the breasts like young roes feeding among the lilies, and the importance of eating the honeycomb with the honey, the notion of a higher love had not really sunk in. It is not until now, walking down Salisbury Road with this stupid flag, that the weak sun of consideration and love, hidden all season long, begins to penetrate the thick clouds of boorishness and lust that are gathered around me.

What I want, I now realize, is more Pat Woman than Rat Woman. Lemberg's bed has been a reminder that you can't have one without the other, but I have reached a decision to approach the hybrid with poetry rather than teen-age aggression. I begin this excursion into

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"softness" by saying to Dennis, "Do you know whose house we were outside back in Hampstead?"

"No."

"Keats'."

"So fucking what?"

This is no more than I expect, but the fact that I have raised the subject is, in itself, a significant beginning.

We arrive at the school. It is late afternoon. The turbulent sun is sending a bright glare to heat things up. Dennis has red hair, and because, at this moment, it matches the color of the sun, I start to feel oppressed by Dennis's head. I say, "Why don't you go and raise the flag yourself?"

"What?" he replies. "After coming all this way?" He tries to fire me up by reminding me of some heinous teacher acts. "Do you remember when Fanny wouldn't let Sless go home early on Friday nights? How about when Fogwell threw you against the wall after your father wrote that bar-mitzvah-lesson note?" But this is second-division stuff, and Dennis knows it. He hadn't cared himself that Sless walked five miles to his Orthodox home instead of catching the bus. He had laughed, along with all the others, when I had my encounter with the wall.

"No," I say. "You go up there. I've had it."

Dennis starts to move very fast. For a moment I feel as if I'm a part of observed Nature. Offscreen, someone is whispering, "The alpha male, by displaying resolution and a sense of urgency, wishes to indicate that his companion is a coward." Dennis throws the flag over the fence and climbs after it. I figure he'll have to get up on the gym roof, which may take him a while, and then make his way along to the crenellated turret that houses the flagpole. I've got at least twenty minutes.

I head into Queens Park and start walking toward the bandstand. I think I'll find some shade, stretch out, meditate. Considering it's a holiday, the place is oddly deserted. Then I see why. About twenty teen-agers are standing near the Pitch and Putt. They're carrying bicycle chains, golf clubs that they have stolen out of the shed, and some long sticks. They're on me before I can even think about running. I recognize a couple of them from the school for psychopaths a hundred yards down the road from our own.

First, it seems, they want to play. One of them, *Homo Kilburnus stupidus*, says, "I didn't know Jews were allowed in this park." His chief mate, a boy with a deceivingly innocent-looking outbreak of summer freckles on his face and a peacock tattooed on his bare chest, says, "They're not."

"So, what are you doing here?" the first says. "Because you are a Jew. You are a *fucking* Jew, aren't you?"

I say, "Yes." This isn't bravery or defiance, because it absolutely doesn't matter what I say. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever" or "Fuck you, I'm C. of E."—the consequences are going to be the same.

In case you think I'm taking all this with an air of cool detachment, I'm not. I shake and sweat and wait to get hit. There's a short interval while Freckles chivalrously challenges me to fight. I say, "No, thanks." Then he belts me in the face with a set of brass knuckles. I make myself fall down, and cover my head with my hands. I can feel the kicks coming in: nasty, sharp ones in the kidneys, and one to the head that feels as if it has broken my fingers. I'm praying that they lay off with the driving irons. I cry, choke, and bleed. For a moment I think they've stopped. I cough, and each breath brings a dragging, boiling, bubbling sound. But they're not done. Two of them pull out my arms while a third presses something into my back. A knife! I scream. They laugh. The bastards are all laughing. Someone says, "Fuck off out of here." I run, dribbling blood and mucus from my nose. Obviously, I haven't been stabbed. I feel my back—nothing. I reach a water fountain, sip, spit, and sip again. It is only when I take off my T-shirt to wipe my face that I see what they've done. Where once there was a blank, white space, the word "Joo" is now inscribed; the two "o"s—jocularity or ignorance? I pull the stained, soaking T-shirt back on. It's hot enough to walk bare-chested, but I've been exposed, and I want to cover myself.

In the shade of a gray slate roof my bodyguard is asleep. The Israeli flag, which I had imagined rippling in waves of triumph, a shiny point of resistance in a constellation of hostility, droops in the windless early dusk. I can't blame Dennis for what has happened to me, although I sort of want to. We are thrown unprotected on the free, spinning world, and we have to take the blows when they come. They do come.

I try to think my beating through, and, on the way to the bus stop, I half manage it. I feel angry and impotent, no doubt about that. For a while, though, I affect a wounded-soldier aspect toward what I have been through. I say to myself, "This is not all that unpleasant"—it's like the bruised fatigue that follows a hard soccer game. Then my kidneys start to ache, and I touch my swollen lips. Suddenly, I find myself in tears. There is nothing redeeming about my pain. It is hurt and humiliation, pure and simple, with its own vectors and swoops.

By the time I get back to Lemberg's, which takes a while, because I have trouble remembering where he lives, it's dark. There are iron clouds stamped in a blue-black sky, and all the warmth of the day has gone down with the sun. When she opens the door Pat looks at me, fails to register any shock, and says, "Been fightin'?" "Sort of," I reply. Over her shoulder I see Lemberg at work. He's directing a nude model, a skinny girl with long black hair, and conical breasts like saltshakers. I suppose he's going to sketch her. As I move in through the door the girl takes up a pose, and Lemberg moves close and adjusts her limbs.

Pat leads me past the artist at work. "You'd better come into the bathroom," she says. "I'll wash your face." There's a bright, naked light bulb hanging over the sink. She touches a cold sponge to my lips and washes the caked blood from my face. I think I might lie and tell her that Dennis and I vanquished a bunch of hard nuts, but instead, I submit to her ministrations. I look in the mirror and review the copper bruises on my jaw and around my cheekbones. The door of the bathroom is open and behind me I can see Lemberg leaning forward to kiss the model. Pat says, "Wanna go to the pictures?"

In the Hampstead Everyman I think, for about an hour and a half, that I might take hold of her hand, but in the end I don't. ♦

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# THE CRITICS

## MUSICAL EVENTS

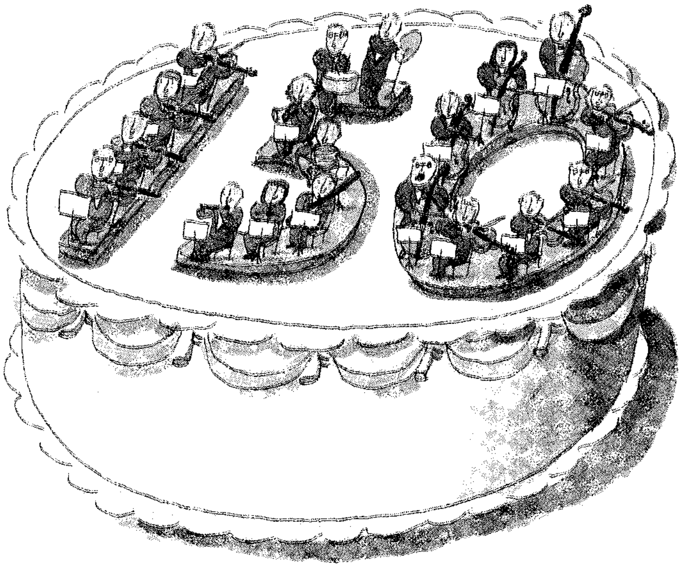
# THE PHILHARMONIC'S HUNDRED-AND-FIFTIETH

### *by Paul Griffiths*

WHAT makes an orchestra? A bunch of musicians, a hall, a tradition, a repertory, a music director, an ex-music director? Somewhere in the entanglement of all these is the particularity, and the continuity, that justifies the present-day Philharmonic in remembering as its own the first concert given by an institution of the same name, on December 7, 1842, when Ureli Corelli Hill raised his baton to open a hundred and fifty years (and many more, one hopes), to the sound of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

The celebration of that moment is a long-running cycle of events. A repetition of Beethoven Five came at the start of the season, and the stream of specially commissioned fanfares and larger works is set to go on through the summer and beyond. Already, we've had Messiaen's "Éclairs sur l'Au-Delà . . .," which alone would justify the birthday festivities and, indeed, the Philharmonic's existence, since few other ensembles in the world could have mounted a new work for such gigantic forces. Programs within the next few months will include concertos written for soloists of the orchestra by Christopher Rouse, Phillip Ramey, and Karel Husa, and a symphony by Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. Meanwhile, the history can be mused over at an exhibition, "The Orchestra & the City," at the Lincoln Center branch of the Public Library until May.

Letters. Programs. Relics. It takes an effort of the imagination to make these sing: the essence of music is that it goes, and leaves behind in the visible world only silent mementos. We seem close to the musicians and the audiences of the eighteen-forties when we can see the copy of the first edition of the Beethoven symphony that Hill used at the inaugural concert, or one of the plates from which the choral parts were printed for the United States première of the Choral Symphony, in 1846. We seem very far away when we learn that the work chosen as the grand finale for the orchestra's début (the Beethoven was the opener) was Johann Kalliwoda's Overture Opus 38.



MERLE NACHT

Among the consistencies through the years have been the management's problems with the great composers, conductors, and soloists it has engaged, or tried to engage. Here is Mahler hoping to second-guess the unions in his appointment of new musicians, at the time he became conductor of a Philharmonic newly refounded, with the backing of J. Pierpont Morgan, Joseph Pulitzer, and others, in 1909. (Until then, the orchestra had been a self-governing coöperative.) Here is Vladimir Horowitz wriggling out of a contracted appearance. Here is Bruno Walter at war with Dimitri Mitropoulos over which of them is to conduct Mahler's First Symphony. Here is Luciano Berio cheekily and charmingly writing to Carlos Moseley to ask for an increase in the commission fee for his Concerto for Two Pianos, in order, as he put it, to save his children from having to go out on the streets to beg for caviar.

Perhaps less familiar now are some of the tussles the orchestra had with the press and with its audience. Around the turn of the century, the board determined to cease advertising in the *New-Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, because of that paper's invariably "venomous" reporting of concerts. And at one point during the First World War it was necessary to include a note in the program book asking listeners to refrain from knitting during performances. Hardly less far off and alien than this, though, is the noise the exhibition records of the storms during Pierre Boulez's first season as music director, only twenty-one years ago. Particular fury seems to have been aroused by a program Michael Gielen conducted—a marvellous program, of Strauss's "Metamorphosen" followed, as disjunctly as possible, by a Nono work, with Berg's "Lulu" suite in the second half. How could the scandal not seem irredeemably ancient when such a program has so quickly become unthinkable?

Mr. Boulez's presence at the gala concert—shared with his successors, Zubin Mehta and Kurt Masur—on the night of the anniversary, was probably going to be an embarrassment anyhow, though the Philharmonic could perhaps have avoided putting its collective foot in it quite so deeply. Conferring honorary membership in the Philharmonic-Symphony Society on its distinguished ex-chief (though only some while after Mr. Mehta had received the same accolade), Stephen Stamas, the society's chairman, referred to Mr. Boulez's pioneering efforts: the Prospective Encounters, which took the orchestra downtown to play Steve Reich and Frederic Rzewski; the Rug Concerts, for which seats were removed and prices lowered, so that a younger audience might be brought into Avery Fisher Hall. (Both initiatives, of course, rapidly fizzled out once Mr. Boulez had left the orchestra, in 1977.) Almost worse was to come, however, in this interlude of speechmaking. To mark the award, Mr. Stamas handed Mr. Boulez a replica of a presentation baton given to Hill, a wonderful thing of blue velvet capped with silver. (The original is in the library exhibition.) As the recipient ruefully pointed out, he had managed to carve out a career (including seven seasons as music director of the Philharmonic) without using a baton, and it might have been dangerous for him to change his habits suddenly for the performance of Debussy's "La Mer" that he was about to conduct. Perhaps Mr. Stamas would hold on to the offering for a moment, and restore it to him when the music was over, "if I have deserved it."

I wonder if the restoration was made. It must be impossible for Mr. Boulez to return to the Philharmonic and not be reminded of the bold vision he had in 1971, of the compromises that had to be made in later seasons, of the frustrations and disappointments, and of the minuscule long-term effect of his regime. His note for the orchestra's glossy birthday brochure reads like an evasion of a sore point: "I don't mind controversy. I think controversy is very healthy, and, therefore, I prefer it to a slow death. . . . You have valleys and you have peaks. But that is, finally, what makes the mountain." Where, one must ask, is that mountain? Or, at least, where is the mountain Mr. Boulez hoped to bring into being—the Everest of a concert season that is "not only a kind of entertainment but . . . part of intellectual life in general"? There was reason for disconsolation in his Debussy performance.

Sometimes the effect of that was to point up grim inheritances that one hadn't suspected were in the work but which, being displayed, were at once unarguable and relevant. In the first movement, for instance, the lower strings have an ostinato passage that here seemed to echo the grind of Alberich's hegemony over the Nibelungs in "Das Rheingold." But often the downbeat character of the performance seemed a response by Mr. Boulez less to the work than to the occasion. There was pathetically little of the bounce and brilliance he has so often found—and, in essays and interviews, described—in the triptych's centerpiece, "Jeux de Vagues." In no sense was that movement a premonition of the allusive formal spin Debussy reached in his next set of orchestral games, the ballet "Jeux." And the life that was eventually found in the finale, with trumpets piping up their monotone Morse-code messages, was unusually vulgar for this conductor—especially for this conductor in this work.

Some of the awkwardness here—but I think only some—must have been due to the disruptiveness of a rehearsal schedule and a concert shared among three conductors, since rhythmic falterings (again unusual for Mr. Boulez) happened as much in the performances under Mr. Mehta and Mr. Masur. The former had chosen Strauss's tone poem "Till Eulenspiegel," and offered the disarming confession that when he first conducted it with the Philharmonic, in 1960, he had never performed it before. There were temptations, though, to read into the maestros' choices other messages than those of loyal souvenir. Was Mr. Boulez suggesting that he found the orchestra all at sea, or that he needed to start over again from the beginning to train these players in the twentieth-century music that matters? Was Mr. Masur saying something in picking the "New World" Symphony? And was there some coded autobiography in Mr. Mehta's selection of a musical story about a virtuoso joker whose demise is announced prematurely? No matter. His account was a cheerful piece of showmanship, polished off by a swift tucking of his hands behind his back, leaving the orchestra to supply the last attack unaided.

Nothing like that from Mr. Masur, needless to say. His conducting of the Dvořák symphony—of which the Philharmonic gave the first performance, nearly a century ago—was forcefully driven almost from start to finish, with some of the effects I've noted in his conducting of Tchaikovsky and Beethoven: a violin sound that easily becomes strained in the upper register, an urgency that is imposed upon the music rather than integral to it, a withering of rhythm to the skeleton of beat. Here his ruthless contrasting of the first movement's principal subjects—one challenging, the second retiring—and his vigorous identification of development as development made altogether an excessive demonstration of sonata form, as if the music needed some special help to prove itself in a competition (with Brahms, perhaps) it had never entered. Much better were the sections in which he found it possible to relax: sections of the slow movement and, best of all, the trio of the scherzo, with the delicious effect of a breeze playing through soft trees in the sound of the woodwinds. We know that the strings of the Philharmonic can glisten with accomplishment, because they did so for Mr. Mehta in the new Messiaen work; but under the orchestra's present music director it always seems to be the woodwind section that brings most joy.

THERE was the same lesson at a concert a couple of days before the anniversary splash—before the hall was self-consciously swagged with gauze and gold tinsel. That time, it was the burble of waiting—a passage heard twice near the start—that provided a

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moment of exquisite relish in an account of Brahms's "Academic Festival Overture" that was otherwise stringent and unrelieved, in Mr. Masur's customary manner. The academic festival for which the Brahms piece supplied an overture was David Diamond's Eleventh Symphony, written for these concerts and, according to the composer, intended for this orchestra and this conductor. That may explain why there was so much that was stringent and unrelieved in the musical fabric.

A composer who has reached an eleventh symphony, and has done so in the course of more than half a century, merits not only amazement but also, perhaps, the kind of respect that would attempt to place his latest work in the context of its ten predecessors. A composer who has reached an eleventh symphony has, in large measure, created the terms in which his music is to be heard and discussed. But I can only leave it to others to fulfill that obligation, since for me this was a first Diamond symphony as well as an eleventh, and, for that reason, I heard it within a framework that might well be foreign to the composer. The spring of triple rhythm against duple, for instance, and the romantic horn background both recalled Tippett, while the earnestness of it all—the combative counterpoint, and the repeated clamping of the same thematic outline onto the lengthy last movement—inevitably suggested Hindemith. Very much the sparkiest of the four conventional movements was the scherzo, moving with a lumpish wit while soloists flashed across it, and coming to an abrupt halt when the concertmaster took his turn. With an eye to the spectacle of his music, Mr. Diamond asks in the score "that no finger cueing be given to the players in this movement, so that the surprise entries by solo players be fully effective." Mr. Masur cheated a bit, but still the movement brought a respite of frolicsomeness.

ANOTHER demonstration of music for the eyes came at the opening of the anniversary gala, before Mr. Mehta, Mr. Boulez, and Mr. Masur made their progress across the stage, when the Philharmonic played Bernstein's "Candide" overture without a conductor. Seeing a full symphony orchestra perform with no one on the podium—without even a hand-signalling soloist—is a rare experience: there's something a touch scary about it, quite apart from the fact that the absence we were feeling was that of the composer-conductor himself. But, beyond those feelings of awkwardness and loss, the performance impressed astonishingly by the fact that it was happening at all—with a far surer string sound than was heard anywhere later in the evening, and with no more rhythmic hazard than was encountered under Mr. Mehta and Mr. Boulez—and then by the fullness with which it offered the ripe mixture of opéra-bouffe gaiety, fat fanfaring, and a European Jewish lyricism (those oscillating fourths) in the answering strains of the middle section.

It would be nice to end with the remark that when playing like this the Philharmonic is unbeatable. But, though that's true, the "Candide" performance emphasized the fact that the orchestra is still looking back to a golden age that came to an end nearly a quarter of a century—a sixth of its lifetime—ago. The opportunity to move into a new age, under Mr. Boulez, was allowed to slip away, and since then there hasn't been much evidence of comparable rethinking. The Casual Saturdays and Rush Hour concerts of the current season don't seem to be designed for the inquiring new audience that Mr. Boulez went some way to attract to his Rug Concerts, and the gallery of composers favored with hundred-and-fiftieth-anniversary commissions—Messiaen apart—suggests a positive avoidance of enterprise and adventure. This would be an apt moment to consider what will make an orchestra, and what will make an audience, for the next hundred and fifty years. ♦

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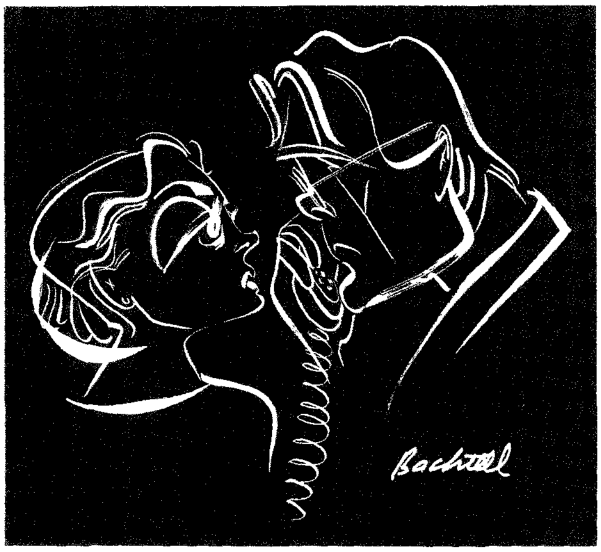
THE CURRENT CINEMA

# FORCE OF NATURE

*by Terrence Rafferty*

GEORGE MILLER'S "Lorenzo's Oil" tells the true story of Augusto and Michaela Odone (Nick Nolte and Susan Sarandon), an educated middle-class Maryland couple whose five-year-old son, Lorenzo (Zack O'Malley Greenburg), is found to have a ruthless degenerative disease. Lorenzo's condition, adrenoleukodystrophy (ALD), is an inherited metabolic defect that leads to severe deterioration of the nervous system. It is considered incurable; its victims usually die within two years of the onset of symptoms. And, worse yet, because it's extremely rare—a "small disease," in numerical terms—it's a tough sell for research funding. Augusto and Michaela are frustrated by the inadequacy of the available therapies and outraged by the primitive state of knowledge about ALD. The ALD Foundation, for the families of the afflicted, seems to them more concerned with consoling shattered parents than with agitating for an acceleration of research efforts. The Odones, watching their son progressively lose his sensory and motor functions, are unable to adopt the passive, fatalistic attitude that's expected of them. By temperament, they're inquisitive, intellectually restless—he's an economist, she's a linguist—and they won't accept the inevitability of Lorenzo's fate until they've studied the disease thoroughly. And, through patient marshalling of the widely scattered data in the medical literature and persistent questioning of the data's therapeutic implications, Augusto and Michaela actually achieve a breakthrough: they develop a treatment that arrests the terrible course of their son's disease. At the end of the movie, a title card tells us that Lorenzo is now fourteen years old.



TOM BACHTELL

*In "Lorenzo's Oil," Susan Sarandon and Nick Nolte play the parents of an ailing son written off by the medical establishment.*

This is an extraordinary story—which is no guarantee of an extraordinary (or even a watchable) movie. It's easy to imagine the Odones' courage and tenacity processed by Hollywood into the sort of shrink-wrapped package of uplift that has, over the years, given the loftiest qualities of the human spirit a really bad name. "Lorenzo's Oil" is a rarity, almost a freak occurrence: an inspirational drama that's genuinely inspiring. Miller (who co-wrote the screenplay, with Nick Enright) doesn't treat his characters reverently. The Augusto and Michaela we see in this film can't be reduced to symbols of pious abstractions; they aren't billboards for anything—not even parental devotion. Miller respects the Odones' experience too much to glaze it with generalities. Instead, he immerses himself in the particulars of their story: the quirks of their personalities; their edgy relationships with those outside their embattled household; the uneven progress of their research into Lorenzo's mysterious disease; the unpredictable turns his condition takes; the radical fluctuations in the level of their emotional strength; and a barrage of medical facts, which generate hypotheses, partial solutions, and con-

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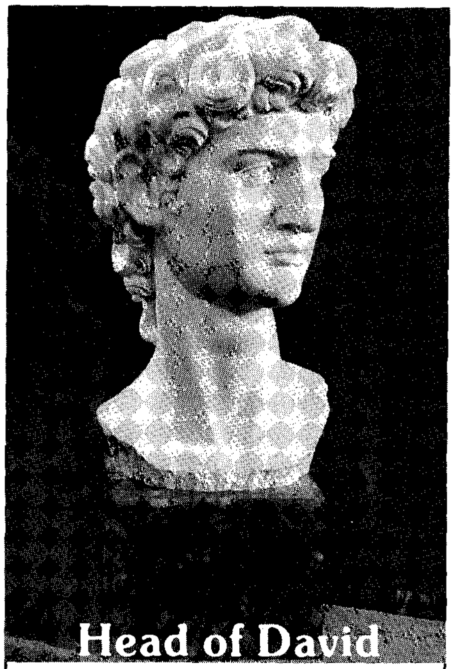

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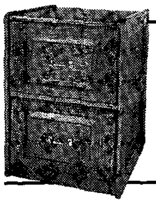

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stantly changing formulations of the problem. The movie risks overwhelming us with information, giving us more specific detail than we can assimilate. The filmmakers seem to share their main characters' urgent conviction that there's no such thing as too much information, and their sense that the "unassimilable" detail—the oddity, the anomaly—is potentially the most important thing of all. "Lorenzo's Oil" both dramatizes and embodies the paradoxical spirit of scientific inquiry: the delicate balance of the passion to acquire more and more knowledge and the rational detachment that enables us to interpret and *use* what's been learned.

At one point, Augusto describes himself as a man whose "simple mind" can handle only "simple questions." He's maybe a bit disingenuous—his mental equipment is clearly very sophisticated—but in essence he's right. Augusto doesn't waste time pondering the imponderable, rummaging through the unsolved-case file of the cosmos in search of answers to "Why us?" or "How can God be so cruel?" He keeps his attention focussed on the material, practical project of figuring out precisely how the awful mechanism of ALD works, and he isn't intimidated by the previous failures of medical science or by his own inexperience in the field. He knows, with the confidence of someone whose intellect has served him well in other areas, that the mysteries of the disease are ones that a human mind *could* get to the bottom of; and he knows, too, that in investigations like this one understanding advances as the mind travels backward, approaching the source of the enigma in a series of ever starker and more basic formulations of the problem to be solved. The simplicity of Augusto's questions is the measure of how deeply he's penetrating his subject.

Nolte uses an Italian accent for this role, and it's a little obtrusive at first. But when Augusto starts to get into his research the performance takes off, and the accent recedes into the larger conception of the character. Nolte gives Augusto's doggedness a manic edge that's both touching and funny: Augusto, bleary-eyed from marathon sessions at the medical library, babbles to innocent bystanders about long-chain monounsaturated fats and spends hours contemplating—like an utter loon—paper-clip-chain models of those stubbornly incomprehensible substances. (ALD does its damage by the accumulation of certain kinds of fatty acids.) Before our eyes, Augusto turns into a mad scientist of Professor Irwin Corey proportions, and Nolte's performance shows us the intellectual rigor beneath the surface mess of the character's personality. Augusto is a man whose grief has driven him both to distraction and to a purer kind of concentration—a fierce clarity about the one vast and compelling problem that occupies his brain.

But Sarandon's Michaela dominates "Lorenzo's Oil." It's an even more difficult role than that of Augusto, because there isn't a trace of humor in it. Michaela saves all her tenderness and charm for Lorenzo. She's hell on everyone else: nurses who show signs of fatigue or indifference; doctors and foundation officers who don't act decisively on the Odones' discoveries; her helpful sister Deirdre (Kathleen Wilhoite), who is banished from the Odone household after daring to express doubts about Michaela's obsessive, all-consuming dedication to Lorenzo's care; and even, at times, Augusto, whose resolve occasionally dips below the superhuman level that she considers minimally acceptable. This isn't just an example of "mother tiger" behavior (as her sister, in a more affectionate moment, characterizes it). Michaela is carrying the burden of the single most unassimilable piece of medical data about ALD—the fact that the disease is transmitted through the mother. Her responsibility for Lorenzo's condition is absolute, inarguable, and the ferocity with which she fights for his dwindling life is fuelled both by her desire to reverse the biological havoc her genes have wrought and by the impulse to punish herself, to atone for her guilt with suffering. (She's a practicing Catholic; the horror she has passed on to her son must evoke for her the perpetual legacy of original sin.) She stands apart from everyone else in the picture: her guilt, by its nature, cannot be shared, and we see in her increasingly haunted and haggard face the devastating effects of the unrelieved moral pressure she has put on herself. As Sarandon plays her, Michaela is a great mother and also a kind of monster: a force of nature at its most ambiguous—destructive and heroically beautiful at once. It's an astonishing portrayal. To the end, Michaela remains stubbornly uningratiating and self-contained, and perhaps the scariest thing about her (and the most remarkable achievement of Sarandon's performance) is that she is profoundly, unshakably indifferent to the opinion of anyone but her son. She's beyond the reach of virtually every kind of worldly authority, mysteriously impervious to fear, to persuasion, to the need for human intimacy, and, especially, to interpretation. She's a spiritual outlaw.

George Miller, who is best known for the punk-inflected "Mad Max" series of action movies, seems at first glance an odd director for this material. But before he became a filmmaker he earned a medical degree and practiced (briefly) in Australia: he's obviously *interested* in the science of the story, and he knows how to explain the data to us—patiently, slowly—so that we get caught up in the medical mystery, too. (He doesn't shy away, either, from showing the gruesome symptoms of Lorenzo's disease or the invasive methods that are sometimes needed to sustain the patient's life.) At times, Miller's style, which is propulsive and hyperkinetic, doesn't feel appropriate: his zooms and overhead shots and Expressionist camera angles can seem needlessly emphatic, underlining emotions that would be plenty intense without any artificial heightening. The bad moments are forgivable, though. They feel like lapses in artistic judgment rather than in sympathy or understanding; Miller is so determined to take us inside the Odones' hearts and minds that he occasionally loses his cool. For the most part, he sticks to the simple, specific questions: not "What is the nature of heroism?" or "How does medical progress occur?" but "How did *these* people do *this*?" And the movie achieves a radiant clarity that sheds light, indirectly, on the larger questions as well. "Lorenzo's Oil," in its relatively modest way, does justice to the human complexities that inform the desire for scientific knowledge, and the movie has the intelligence to leave many of these emotional mysteries intact. The Odones, drawing on the disparate resources of their individual characters, bring off a partial miracle. Lorenzo is improbably alive, but he's still mute and nearly immobile: the neurological effects of the disease are almost certainly irreversible. The honest emotion that "Lorenzo's Oil" produces out of what might have been banal tearjerker material is another kind of small but real wonder. It gives human virtues a human scale. ♦

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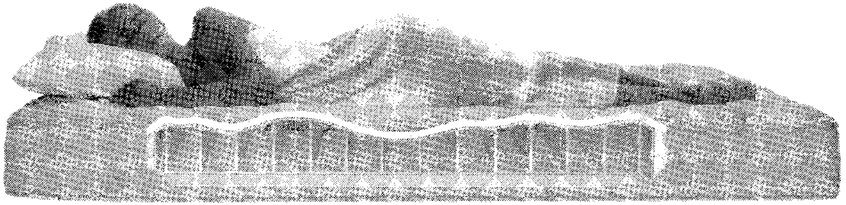

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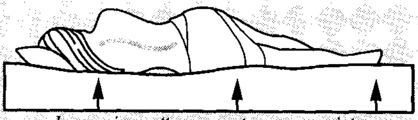

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BOOKS

# A SLOW BOAT TO CHINA

*by Naomi Bliven*

Alain Peyrefitte's "The Immobile Empire" (*translated from the French by Jon Rothschild; Knopf; $30*) recalls a two-hundred-year-old diplomatic fiasco: in September, 1792, the British government sent Lord George Macartney to Peking with instructions to seek an exchange of resident ambassadors and to ask for improvements in the way the Chinese treated British merchants; the Emperor Qianlong totally and impolitely rejected his requests. The mission's failure was a turning point—Peyrefitte calls it "a kind of hinge in the history of relations between the West and Far East." It transformed the way Europeans thought about China. Macartney and his government edited the official report to conceal the worst of Chinese backwardness and arrogance, but unofficial memoirs told the truth, and Europeans learned that the China they had admired was a Western fantasy. Peyrefitte's book is political, diplomatic, social, and economic history, but, above all, it's a history of emotion—the story of how the West began to fall out of love with China.

The work is a product of the author's experience—he is a former French minister and diplomat—and his devotion to his subject. He has travelled to China eight times and has concluded that Macartney is to China what Tocqueville was to the United States. Peyrefitte's narrative is almost startlingly vivid (the translation is very readable), and he makes artful use of his documentary sources. Among these are the recollections of fifteen British eyewitnesses, including a delightfully candid twelve-year-old boy, and the Emperor's own records as well—Peyrefitte learned that Qianlong's correspondence and edicts, which have never before been published, had survived in the Chinese imperial archives. As he remarks, we know more about the mission than any of the participants, and we can read their divergent interpretations of the same incidents and appreciate, as they couldn't, that the embassy was from its beginning a comedy of cultural misunderstanding. Peyrefitte draws the contrasts: Great Britain was a small country on the rise, China a large one in decline. The British were in the midst of exploring the creative, expansive powers of industry and finance—of capitalist development—while the Chinese scorned business and businessmen. The British were fascinated by innovation and the growth of knowledge; the Chinese couldn't grasp the idea of progress. The British, endlessly curious, sailed the world to buy, sell, and discover. The Chinese, convinced that their society was already perfect, went nowhere. Peyrefitte encourages us to enjoy the humor as perplexed men from wholly dissimilar mental worlds talk past each other, but his epilogue, which sketches Chinese-Western relations from Macartney's departure, in January, 1794, to the present, emphasizes that the long-term effects of this encounter were tragic.

Early on, the author explains that as far back as Roman times, when silk reached Europe overland, Europe's balance of trade with China was unfavorable, and that it grew even more unfavorable after Europeans began trading by sea. In the eighteenth century, the Chinese sold foreigners tea, silk, porcelain, and curios, but, except for opium smuggled from India, they bought little from abroad. He also tells us that Marco Polo's famous thirteenth-century stay coincided with the rule of a dynasty, the Yuan, that opened China, but that its successor, the Ming, closed the country. The Ming counter-revolution aimed at returning China to an idealized Confucian hierarchy and rejected change and the foreigners who might bring it. The Manchus, who reigned during Macartney's embassy, exaggerated the Ming xenophobia and obsession with ritual. Europeans had sent fifteen embassies to China since 1521, and every one had been a failure.

Macartney's was the sixteenth, and he expected it to succeed. He was an experienced diplomat and administrator, and he came in strength (on a sixty-four-gun warship) and in splendor (with a suite of a hundred), carrying an assortment of magnificent gifts. Set up in a hall in Peking's Summer Palace, they looked, Peyrefitte says, like a British exhibit at a world's fair. There was a model of the solar system, a coach, firearms, crystal chandeliers, a hot-air balloon, and much more. The British hoped that the Emperor would take one look and start a national shopping spree; London had no idea that Peking would regard Macartney's fabulous presents as a barbarian vassal's tribute—tokens of submission, not objects of desire.

Like most educated Europeans, Macartney and his staff had imbibed the vision of China popularized by Enlightenment intellectuals (Peyrefitte mentions Leibniz, Voltaire, and Quesnay), who imagined a perfectly rational society ruled by a benevolent despot in accordance with the teachings of a philosopher, Confucius, and under the guidance of a bureaucracy of literary intellectuals. The English, knowing that innumerable inventions had come to the West from China, assumed that Chinese science and technology were up to date, and that the Chinese would be fascinated by European scientific and technological progress. But they discovered almost immediately that the Chinese, who invented the compass, had forgotten whatever they once knew about deep-sea navigation. As for geography, the Chinese thought China was literally the center of the earth, and detested European globes (the British brought one), because their country didn't look big enough on them. In Peking, a Portuguese priest who served as the imperial astronomer confided that he had been predicting eclipses with the help of an old French almanac; new almanacs had ceased arriving after the French Revolution. (The embassy's astronomer gave him a set of Royal Navy almanacs.) Macartney's troop had difficulty comprehending the extent of China's intellectual decay; it was even harder for them to imagine Chinese ignorance of Britain's greatness. The ambassador didn't understand, until after he had been presented to the Emperor, that the festivities surrounding his reception at court weren't honors paid to George III: Macartney had been herded together with other tribute-bearing vassals (Mongols, Burmese, Kalmucks) to celebrate the Emperor's birthday. But Chinese contempt for the British was mixed with fear, because (as the embassy noticed) the Chinese, who had invented gunpowder, had next to no guns, and knew that Macartney's flotilla could blow their ports to bits.

All the mandarins who accompanied Macartney, from the moment he landed until the moment he sailed, were spies. Everything the British said or did was reported to the Emperor by courier, and the Emperor's replies and commands, written in vermillion ink, sped back. (Like Franz Josef, the penultimate Hapsburg emperor, Qianlong rose earlier than most of his subjects and toiled over his bureaucracy's papers.) So we know that the Emperor began by treating the English with benign condescension, but in August, 1793, while the embassy was still making its way to the capital—it had landed in June, after nine months at sea—his attitude became hostile. In particular, the issue of the kowtow—three prostrations, each with the forehead touching the ground three times—grew heated. Macartney refused to kowtow, because doing so would have acknowledged that George III was Qianlong's subordinate. Since the Chinese believed that the English king, like every other ruler in the world, was indeed a subordinate of the Emperor, they regarded Macartney's refusal as something worse than bad manners, and though they finally allowed him to kneel to the Emperor as he knelt to his

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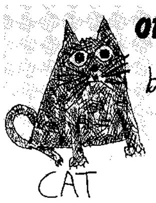

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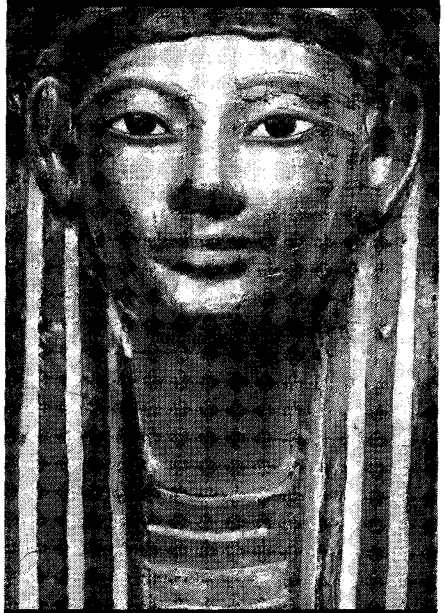

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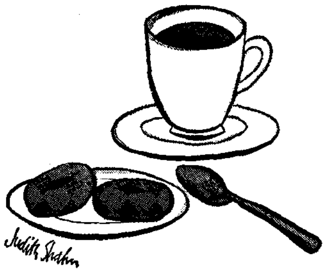
own King, they expunged that fact from their records. Peyrefitte says that most Chinese still believe that Macartney kowtowed. To most Westerners, his refusal may be the most memorable thing about the embassy, but Peyrefitte assures us that it made no difference to the mission's outcome; the Emperor began to compose his reply to King George's letter in July, and Macartney didn't even reach the court until mid-September. Peyrefitte prints the Emperor's complete text for the first time. The original was so insulting that the translators cut it before handing it to Macartney, and the British government made further excisions before publishing it, lest an enraged British population demand an immediate declaration of war.

As the embassy and Peyrefitte proceed, the author finds occasions to take swipes at Enlightenment intellectuals who "questioned every aspect of European society and no aspect of Chinese society," and at their spiritual descendants, those twentieth-century Westerners who idealized Mao's China. But, however Peyrefitte assesses the European Enlightenment, his book is an irrefutable argument against any society that refuses to think, to experiment, and to innovate—that closes its mind and its borders. The cost to China was disastrous. Macartney's embassy arrived at perhaps the last moment that a Chinese industrial revolution could have halted China's slide into desperate poverty. But the Chinese were psychologically unable to grasp the chance Macartney offered them to learn, through trade, and their ignorance and arrogance reinforced each other. The Emperor hustled the British homeward without allowing them to demonstrate their wonderful new machines: in 1860, when Europeans sacked the Summer Palace, they found most of the mission's presents, including a set of cannons, still there, untouched.



Peyrefitte contends that although new sacred texts (Marx, Mao) have replaced Confucius, and a new hierarchy (Communist) has replaced the mandarins, China hasn't really changed since the seventeen-nineties. Ancient xenophobia now feeds on the belief that Western capitalism caused China's poverty. Unfashionably, but accurately, Peyrefitte remarks that China, like all Third World countries, was poor long before capitalists came calling. But, if China hasn't changed, the West hasn't changed much, either. In "Marco Millions," published in 1927, Eugene O'Neill created a visionary China in order to berate the United States; his play reads like an eighteenth-century pamphlet. In Carl Crow's 1937 best-seller, "Four Hundred Million Customers," the anecdotal memoirs of an American who founded an advertising agency in China, there is a chapter warning Western businessmen against an illusion that spurred Macartney's generation—that China's enormous population was agog to buy Western goods. And, of course—though Peyrefitte doesn't mention it—Americans, too, like Europeans before Macartney, deceived themselves about a Chinese ruler: Chiang Kai-shek.

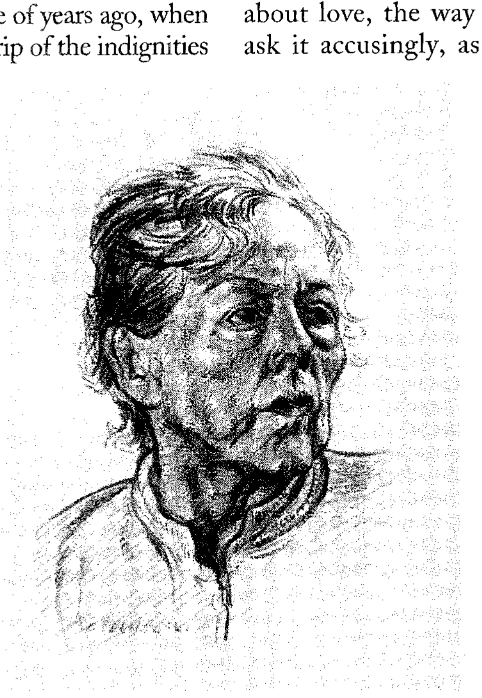
Peyrefitte's moral is plain and grim: no foreign nation can influence the Chinese toward a tolerable human-rights policy, because the Chinese have no respect for the opinions of non-Chinese mankind. Yet Peyrefitte's pessimism—his insistence that China remains unteachable and unreachable—strikes me as overwrought; he sounds like a man trying to persuade himself. In spite of all we know, none of us in the West really want to relinquish our illusionary China. It's easy to make fun of our infatuation with the exotic—with noble savages as well as with Oriental sages. I suppose it is ridiculous that citizens of the world's richest and most advanced societies persist in believing that wealth and wisdom reside elsewhere. But our illusions, though no guide to foreign policy, have enriched our culture. In his study of European decorative art, "Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay," Hugh Honour mentions a third-century Western fabric made "in Chinese design." Whether we think of Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan or of seventeenth-century delft, our imaginary China remains dear to us because we made it; it's ours. ♦

## BOOKS

# A HUNGER ARTIST

*by Mary Hawthorne*

MARY FRANCES KENNEDY FISHER'S just issued book, "To Begin Again: Stories and Memoirs, 1908-1929" (Pantheon; $21), is mostly about the years of her youth in California, before her first marriage and her now celebrated sojourns in France and Switzerland. Some of these pieces were written as recently as a couple of years ago, when she was fully in the grip of the indignities of old age and Parkinson's, and could be found propped in bed on pillows, drinking strange pink cocktails through a straw and feeding on—what else?—oysters. She died last June, on the verge of her eighty-fourth birthday.

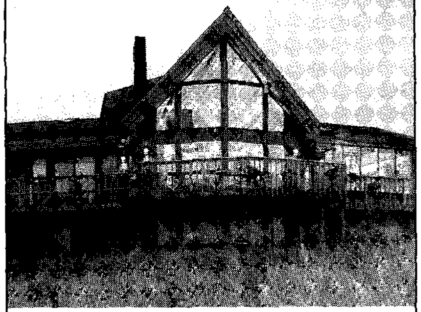

*M. F. K. Fisher: Physiologist of taste.*

Since the publication, in 1937, of "Serve It Forth," her first book, M. F. K. Fisher has hovered, continuously and vaguely, in the public imagination as a kind of Katharine Hepburn of culinary arts and letters. She was well bred and well loved as a child, beautiful (Man Ray photographed her), gifted, shrewd, and—therefore, perhaps—possessed of an occasionally noteworthy arrogance. ("I was a haughty child," she has said with some pride.) People have tended to embrace her as "the grande dame of gastronomy" or "the doyenne of food writers," or else to avoid her, skeptical of arguments that her work is really about something beyond mere *food*, and suspecting a chilly élitism and superficiality in the very lustre of her style, to say nothing of her ostensible subject.

What *was* Fisher writing about all those years? "Serve It Forth" was followed by eighteen other books, not including her famous 1949 translation of Brillat-Savarin's "The Physiology of Taste." Even she seemed to feel the need to defend herself. In the foreword to her book "The Gastronomical Me" (1943) she wrote, "People ask me: Why do you write about food, and eating and drinking? Why don't you write about the struggle for power and security, and about love, the way others do? They ask it accusingly, as if I were somehow gross, unfaithful to the honor of my craft. The easiest answer is to say that, like most other humans, I am hungry. But there is more than that. It seems to me that our three basic needs, for food and security and love, are so mixed and mingled and entwined that we cannot straightly think of one without the others." The explanation—repeatedly quoted, as if in proof—is, in fact, a mostly good and accurate one. Hunger is a messy, tangled business, and Fisher does indeed acknowledge, in both subtle and overt ways, the reach of appetite into the realm of power—something she was keenly aware of from a young age, when she began cooking for her own family: "The stove, the bins, the cupboards, I had learned forever, make an inviolable throne room. From them I ruled; temporarily I controlled. I felt powerful, and I loved that feeling." Later, she added, "I . . . was basically what Beerbohm calls, somewhat scornfully, 'a host' and not 'a guest': I loved to entertain people and dominate them with my generosity."

As for love, there is ample, if often oblique or ambiguous, reference to it in her work; again, longing is much in evidence. And sometimes Fisher wanders into the

A CUT ABOVE.



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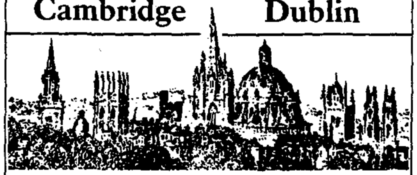

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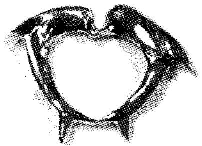

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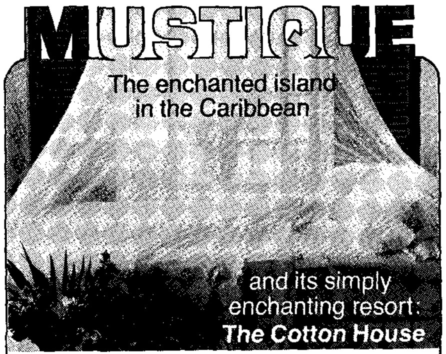
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sexual in surprising and delightful ways. Her own infatuation with food commenced in childhood with the simple discovery of the pleasures of the forbidden. Again and again in her books Fisher describes the influence of her puritanical Grandmother Holbrook, who lived with the family, in Whittier, California, until her death, when Fisher was eleven. The tale is a classic of its day. Because Grandmother held the purse strings (Fisher's father was a struggling Episcopalian newspaper editor in an alien, sometimes hostile Quaker community, her mother a "prairie princess" from Iowa), she also held the grocery list, and dictated the family diet, adjusting it to accommodate her own "despotic bowels" and her singular revulsion at pleasure or sensuality in any form:

*Grandmother's Boiled Dressing*

1 cup cider vinegar
Enough flour to make thin paste
Salt to taste

Mix well, boil slowly fifteen minutes or until done, and serve with wet shredded lettuce.

Periodically, Grandmother would travel to the sanatorium in Battle Creek for a cure, or to a religious convention in Asbury, New Jersey, and the entire family—closet bacchanalians all—would indulge in a riotous dining-room hedonism. And a few years later Fisher, ensconced in an all-girls boarding school and surrounded by admiring ad-hoc lesbians at the annual Christmas dinner-dance, experiences the heady sway of more wicked sin: "With the unreasoning and terrible persnicketiness of a sixteen-year-old I knew that I would be sick if I had to swallow anything in the world alive, but especially a live oyster," she writes. "I remembered hearing Mother say that it was vulgar as well as extremely unpleasant to do anything with an oyster but swallow it as quickly as possible, without *thinking*, but that the after-taste was rather nice."

Then there is the profound solace of food—security like no other. Fisher, especially in her stories of Provence, where she lived with her two daughters in the late fifties and early sixties, describes a world that, in her rendering of the particulars of time and place and *soil*, is immensely satisfying and at the same time makes us nearly ill with nostalgia. Nostalgia, furthermore, for something that was never part of the experience of most of us to begin with. What *is* part of our experience is the horrible recognition of that era's passing, and today, jostling one's way through any farmers' market, one cannot help remarking the profound sense of gratitude and astonishment everywhere as dazed customers shyly feast their senses on shimmering rows of Biblical fruits, perfect in their imperfection: apples, pears, figs, quinces, pomegranates—*tiny orchards in a box*. Fisher has been instrumental in bringing an appreciation of these timeless creations to our conscious attention, and the adoration of food nowadays constitutes a virtual pagan splinter religion, its icons the paintings of Bartolomeo Bimbi, Giovanna Garzoni, Cézanne, Chardin, and countless others. It seems miraculous, given the general decrepitude and gloom of the urban world, that not only do certifiable vestiges of paradise remain but it is still actually possible to partake of them. The dearly purchased truffle whose perfume wafts from one's pocket is thus no mere truffle but something much larger—something that extends to the little sow, the *chercheuse*, who found it buried at the foot of an oak tree in the historic dirt of Périgord. There are also the pleasures of more idiosyncratic indulgences, as Fisher points out—like tangerine sections roasted on a radiator in winter in Strasbourg, or a bowl of potatoes mashed with ketchup—which have a poignancy all their own. (And what, I wonder, would Fisher have made of the last meals commonly requested by death-row inmates: T-bone steak, French fries, iced tea?)

But what Fisher doesn't mention about her subject is what seems to me to be at the core of her work: her rather touching desire—perhaps compulsion—simply to honor her own intensely sensual experience of the world. Fisher possessed the instinctive fierce hauteur of an animal that knows its own worth and place in a hierarchy, and thrills at the superiority of its keenness and its cunning; you can almost feel the metronomic twitching of a tail as she surveys her surroundings with both rapt attention and a certain detachment. Metaphors of the natural world abound in her work ("I was surprised at how beautiful her body was . . . with high firm breasts and a clear triangle of golden hair, like an autumn leaf"; "Anita-Patita would move like an imperturbable cricket about the kitchen"; "I fled family and friends and security like a suddenly freed pigeon, or mole, or wildcat"; "Her hair was like mud"). Her coup was in finding a niche in which to display the fruits of her desire. A. J. Liebling, for example, writes of his gastronomic exploits with gleeful and hilarious abandon ("I had chosen *côtes d'agneau* as the safest item in the mediocre catalogue that the Prospéria's prospectus of bliss had turned into overnight. They had been cut from a tired Alpine billy goat and seared in machine oil, and the *haricots verts* with which they were served resembled decomposed whiskers from a theatrical-costume beard"); Fisher instead offers exquisite and precisely remembered collages of sensation ("In my mouth the chocolate broke at first like gravel into many separate, disagreeable bits. I began to wonder if I could swallow them. Then they grew soft, and melted voluptuously into a warm stream down my throat"). These memories then blossom into delicate essays and stories and reminiscences—larger but equally artful arrangements of her closely observed experience. The beauty of the best of them lies in their insularity and incompleteness. Her pieces frequently suggest the qualified plot of a dream; they tend not so much to end as to evanesce, like a Satie "Gymnopedie," into uncomplaining melancholy or query.

AT the start of "Among Friends" (1970), her book of memoirs about growing up among the Quakers, Fisher writes (in a chapter entitled, incidentally, "Then Begin Again"), "Most minds have someplace in them a scrappy collection of phrases that are *there*, caught like gnats in the honey of memory. . . . Why do I still chant now and then, even aloud . . . 'Begin, and cease, and then begin again.' " The question not only highlights the title of her new collection—what was the spell of Arnold's "Dover Beach" for Fisher?—but also suggests the repetitive, homing nature of her memory, hence of her writing. Much of what Fisher wrote was some form of memoir, so it's surprising that her work isn't particularly confiding or revelatory. And, even for those who don't subscribe to the idea that the contents of medicine cabinets or diaries marked for burning necessarily reveal the secrets of the soul, Fisher seems oddly, though no doubt calculatedly, closemouthed. Perhaps, like many women of her generation, she found the idea of revelation not only foreign but unseemly, indulgent—worst of all, foolish. (Fisher did not, of course, suffer fools gladly.) Her revelations are incompletely articulated aperçus of isolated moments and events. In fact, she is most compelling—and seems most natural and at home—when her subject *is* surface and immediate sensation. There is a magic in her description of, say, a scorching Provençal summer:

> I could almost feel the food in the baskets swelling with juice, growing soft, splitting open in an explosive rush toward ripeness and disintegration. The fruits and vegetables of Provence are dying as they grow—literally leaping from the ancient soil, so filled with natural richnesses and bacilli and fungi that they seem a kind of summing up of whatever they *are*.

Or an Alsatian winter:

> I used to go across into the Orangerie when I felt too cold to sit still, and watch what animals had thick enough fur to wander outside their cages. I'd stand and stand, waiting for some sign of life from the rumpled creatures on the other side of the bars, but even the guinea pigs were too stiff to carry out their usual haphazard copulations. The storks, symbol of Alsace, would stare bleakly at me and occasionally drop a languid feather into the frozen filth, and I would turn back to my home, stumbling a little in my haste to get there before the fire went out again.

And it is Fisher's own complete absorption that accounts for her magic. That, and perhaps the fact that her absorption is not interrupted by profound considerations of a great deal else. The questions we might have about her life reside in the realm of the intimate and, often, the painful; it seems unfair to criticize her for not having written about anything beyond what she chose to. Still, we are haunted by ghostly remembrances of husbands, for example, who figure prominently in her work and then vanish, almost without comment. (There is a peculiar addendum at the end of "Tree Change," a story in the current collection which concerns a lovely Christmas memory from childhood: "I got married in September of 1929, but Christmas was always the same while Rex and Edith [her parents] were alive.") Of her three marriages she said not long ago, with laconic ambivalence and frost, "They were fine marriages as marriages go. I don't like marriage myself."

In 1983, Fisher published a book of stories, "Sister Age," that took as its subject the pain of growing older. It is as personal and sad and stoic a volume as she ever wrote, and perhaps offers the best chance of understanding the complexity of her aloofness. In "A Kitchen Allegory," Mrs. Quayle, "an agreeable and

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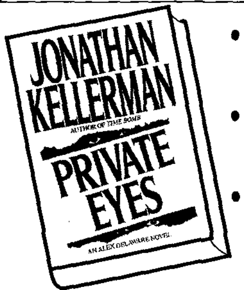

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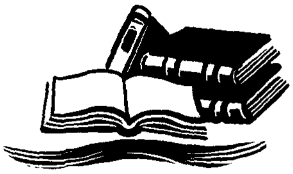
reasonable woman—in her private estimation, at least," in preparation for a visit from her daughter and grandson, compulsively stocks the house with food that she knows does not interest her daughter. The daughter arrives with her son on a bus and hastily announces her forthcoming marriage to a man unknown to Mrs. Quayle. Having barely tasted a morsel of the lonely woman's offerings, the two leave, six hours later.

> She heard again the bus whining off into the dark, and saw through its blue window glass the tiny hand, like a sea anemone, of her grandson. Behind him, a more earthly flower, was her dear child, the purposeful shadow of a fine relationship. "Until soon," she called into the glass. They made mouths back at her, compassionately. And then she returned to the confrontation with her stores of unwanted, uneaten, unneeded nourishment.

At last, food fails. Along with so much else.

In "To Begin Again" Fisher has, for the most part, moved on from those unhappy tales, which were principally the anticipations of old age, into the real thing—the freer and, to a certain extent, dottier realm of someone who has actually passed into it. The book is foremost a curiosity, innocently redundant. It feels as if it were written by someone whose powers have peaked, even though not all the pieces in it are actually the work of an enfeebled Fisher. But its focus, youth, is the traditional subject of the old, who so often can recall the most obscure moments of childhood with extraordinary clarity as they approach full circle ("Inside the Orpheum, all was pulsating excitement and the throb of drums to such young ears as ours, so uncalloused by the artful assaults of radio and TV. Outside, there was the still-timid tinny sound of what was beginning to be called traffic"). The draw of this collection is the evidence it provides of what Fisher, as an old person, thought worth bringing to light. Her home in Glen Ellen, California, where she spent the last twenty years of her life, housed a myriad of boxes, which, in turn, housed innumerable notes, clippings, and drafts of things she thought she might one day like to write about. Why these stories? There is a piece on the place of her birth (Albion, Michigan) and why it has always rankled her not to have been born in California. There is one on a superstitious attachment she had to a particular coral pendant in childhood. There is a story about an invisible childhood playmate of her brother's, and about an invisible little old man she held her hand out to for protection and comfort every night for many years after she first married, and who has now simply left her: "Speaking dispassionately, I would say that I need his warm strong hand in mine more now than ever, but he is not there. My hand, left out, would grow cold and awkward." There are pretty childhood reminiscences, like "Tree Change" and "A Few Notes About Aunt Gwen," and a rather uncharitable one, "Mother and 'Miss E.,'" about the "dried-up" home-town librarian to whom Fisher's mother gave an annual Christmas gift of "a flamboyantly sexy and extravagant nightgown." There are the journals of adolescence. And then there is "Gracie," a story, written in 1957, about childhood cruelty and its roots—in this case, racism and classism—which is one of the best. "I watched her straight blue-black hair hanging down, and I knew that I would never see her again. I knew that I was damned forever to be pink and white, as my mother had told me several years before, and I felt like crying. . . . I hope that if she is alive she does not remember me." In "The Jackstraws," another tale of remorse, written thirty years later, Fisher muses, with uncharacteristic introspection, "Every thinking man is prone, particularly as he grows older, to feel waves large or small of a kind of cosmic regret for what he let go past him. He wonders helplessly—knowing how futile it would be to feel any active passion—how he could have behaved as he did or let something or other happen without acknowledging it." The elliptical evidence suggests that Fisher did suffer, in her sensitivity and in her superciliousness, and that her retreat into the circumscribed world of food provided her not only with a source of sensuous pleasure without risk of pain but with a sanctuary in which she could practice her own particular brand of alchemy. From the shelter of this world, she could add, hopefully, rightly, "The only salve to this occasional wound, basically open until death, no matter how small and hidden—is to admit that there is potential strength in it: not only in recognizing it as such but in accepting the long far ripples of understanding and love that most probably spread out from its beginning." ♦



# BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

## FICTION

### *The Porcupine*

*by Julian Barnes (Knopf; $17)*

In an unnamed Eastern European country, Stoyo Petkanov, the deposed President of the former Communist state, is being prosecuted for fraud, abuse of authority, and mismanagement in a nationally televised trial. The government attorney, Peter Solinsky, is a law professor and tepid dissident who has framed the charges against the tyrant narrowly in order to insure conviction, but the ulterior purpose of the trial is to provide a political catharsis and a distraction for a nation exhausted by disillusionment and food shortages. Much of this novella consists of the transcribed thoughts of these two characters, and Mr. Barnes has never seemed more like a nimble ventriloquist than when he traces the crude thoughts of the "helmsman" of a blacked-out and impoverished land. The author wields his usual wit in discovering the ironic pitfalls of conducting a democratic show trial, but, in its brevity and bitterness, this imaginative dispatch seems designed as a brusque reaction to the triumphalism and the short attention span of the post-Cold War West. "The conspiracy of normality"—the persistence of bad faith and dishonesty—crosses all frontiers, Mr. Barnes seems to say, and it offers a perennial challenge to memory and truth.

## GENERAL

### *Uncertain Unions: Marriage in England 1660-1753*

*by Lawrence Stone (Oxford; $35)*

Most of this book is devoted to case studies—in effect, short stories or novellas drawn from life. In each of them, an interested party—a spouse, a rejected lover, a kinsman or kinswoman—sued in the ecclesiastical courts, which in this period had jurisdiction over matrimonial law, to decide the validity of a marriage. Exploring the possibilities of marital disaster in the words of real people, the author conveys the domestic manners of the English with an immediacy that is sometimes horrifying, occasionally poignant, and invariably fascinating. Mr. Stone has devoted his career as a historian to examining the transformation of the family from a corporate business institution revolving around property to a private arena concerned primarily with individuals' happiness. In those years in England, the transformation was far from complete, and humanity is often shown at its least attractive: snobbish, greedy, sexually exploitive. While legal suits obviously do not represent the outcome of most marriages, the norms to which the litigants appeal tell us that most English people expected a marriage to be, at best, no more than a reasonably pacific exchange of goods and services.

### *We Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young*

*by Lieutenant General Harold G. Moore (Ret.) and Joseph L. Galloway (Random House; $25)*

In November, 1965, Hal Moore, then a lieutenant colonel, led four hundred and fifty men in a helicopter-borne assault on Landing Zone X-Ray, in the Ia Drang Valley of South Vietnam. His mission was to find and engage the enemy, and he succeeded: his force was quickly besieged by about two thousand North Vietnamese and Vietcong troops. Only intense artillery bombardment and close air support kept Moore's troops from being overrun; a few days later, an American force at a nearby landing zone was slaughtered. With Moore at X-Ray was Joe Galloway, then a reporter for U.P.I. They have put together a painstaking account of the two engagements, drawing on their own memories, after-action reports, and interviews with survivors (including the commander of the North Vietnamese troops). The scenes of battle are harrowing, and are told with a passion that makes it clear that although these two men were not wounded, they did not come away unscarred. The authors' efforts to deal with larger issues of the war, however, are less successful: little support is given to their claim that Ia Drang was "the battle that changed the war," and they continue to see the conflict in the narrow military terms that blinded so many American leaders to the profoundly political nature of the war.

### *Personal Witness: Israel Through My Eyes*

*by Abba Eban (Putnam; $29.95)*

This diplomatic and political memoir traces its author's transit from bright young man (seeking recognition of the not yet existing State of Israel at the brand-new United Nations) to grand old man (since 1974 a former Foreign Minister, often at odds with his country's foreign policy). Mr. Eban's narrative recalls countless international leaders exhibiting their strengths and weaknesses through innumerable international crises, and serves as a kind of textbook in diplomatic technique. So much for the book's business. Its pleasure is the writing. Whatever Mr. Eban recounts, he vividly conjures up—Cambridge in the nineteen-thirties, Cairo in the forties, Jerusalem in the nineties. When it seems appropriate, he displays earnestness and commitment; for the most part, though, his charming style might be described as light ironic.

## VERSE

### *A Dream of Mind*

*by C. K. Williams (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $16)*

Williams' impassioned new poems are propelled by anxiety over guilt and loss, love and death. They are stark and driven, but also blessed in their own confusion or lyric unrest: "Are there deeper wounds in us than we know; might grief itself be communion and solace?" Some of the ruminations on infidelity or divorce, jealousy or desire might be out of a play by Pinter or a story by Cheever, yet the magnetism of Williams' "long line" and its psalmic or dithyrambic resonance prohibit any easy narrative ploy. His best poems, as in his earlier books "Tar" and "Flesh and Blood," are a way of mastering the flux of the mind's "turbulent stillness"—that mode of being, wryly bitter, brashly human, which he cannot either escape from or disown. ♦

# SHOUTS AND MURMURS

## WAITING IN ROOM 3-120

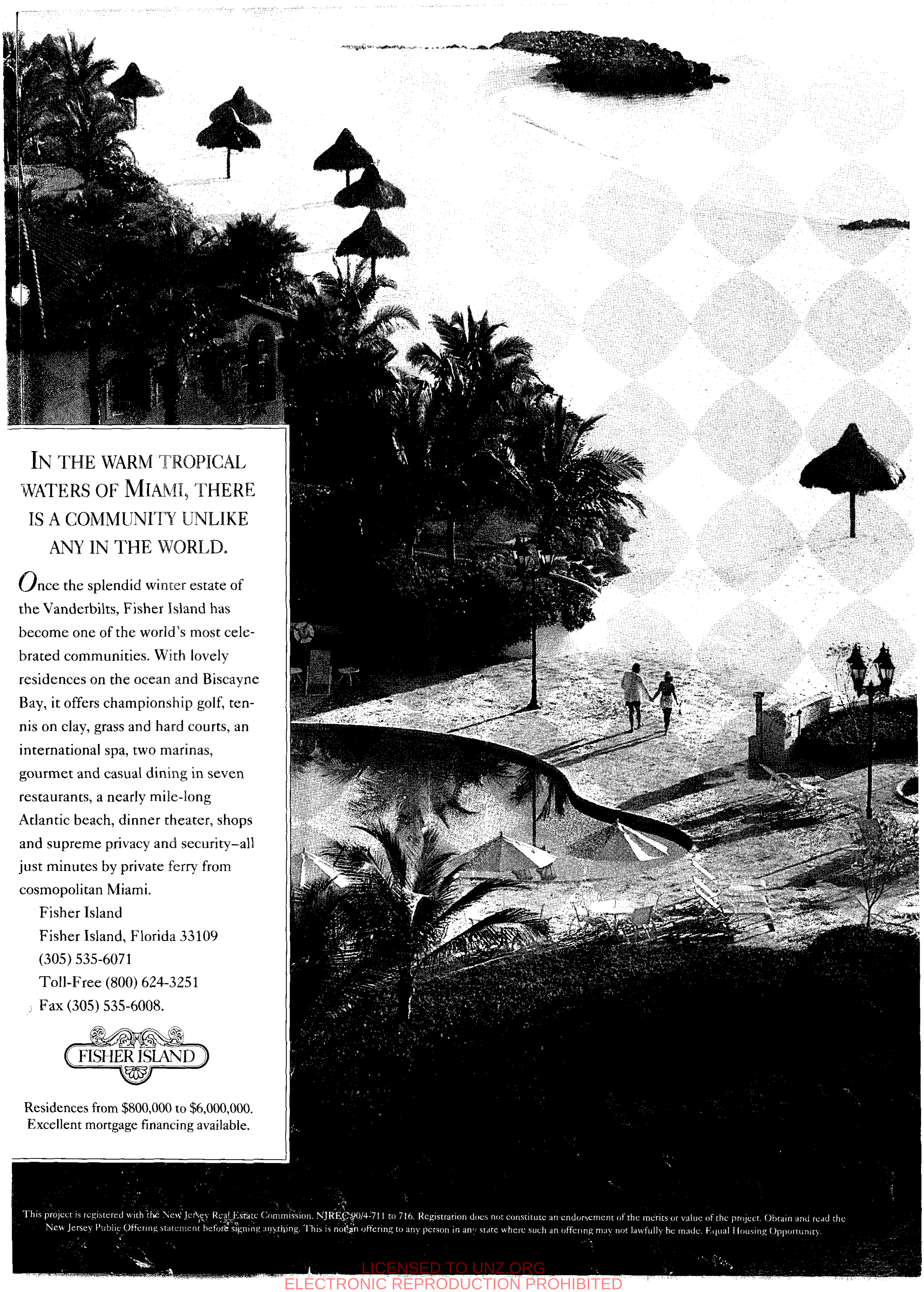
*by Kennedy Fraser*

As everyone in America knows, you can be a New Yorker without quite being an American. I've lived in this city for many years with a "green card," as a Permanent Resident Alien. The Immigration and Naturalization Service is calling in green cards as ancient as my own; an officer at J.F.K. gave me an appointment to visit the I.N.S., downtown. The morning of the day he named, six or seven hundred people were patiently waiting at the front doors of the Javits Building, in Federal Plaza, and a couple of hundred others (with "appointments") were lined up beside a shabby hedge to enter a door on the side. In front and in back of me, people clutching instruction sheets like my own ("Go Directly to Third Floor Info Area, Room 3-120") shuffled forward by inches. The streets beyond the hedge were lined with photograph-and-notary joints and legal offices ("Green Cards," "*Todos los Servicios*," "Translations $35 and Up"). Camp followers in grimy petticoats, these establishments serve and depend on the bureaucracy; the same anxious, humble, never-ending crowd flows through them all, wearing tracks in the linoleum and rubbing corners off the desks.

A young Chinese woman rushed past us, waving a sheaf of photocopies. The baby strapped to her chest wore a look of astonishment; his spiky tussock of blue-black hair wafted up and down. One by one, we went in—passing under the arch of the metal detector, with its sign informing us that our weapons would be confiscated and not returned. On the X-ray, the contents of my handbag looked unfamiliar, like a cache of bones. My identity was leaching out as well. I had no depth, no past, no city; I was an applicant among a thousand such, trapped in eternal anterooms. When the elevator disgorged us—the woman in a sari; the dazed Old Country grandma leaning on a young man's arm; the Hispanic moppet in scarlet frills—Room 3-120 was felt as a muffled roar. People milled in the doorway of the room—a long, narrow, modern chamber with a ceiling mean-spiritedly low. There was a babel of languages. "Keep moving! Through the *door!*" an employee bellowed, making shooing motions.

Red numbers mounted at an excruciating, electronic crawl above the counters of the immigration officers, safe behind a wall of glass, and then flashed for a peremptory moment ("Number 738, Window Eleven! Last call!"). Several hundred people stood about with folded arms or leaned against the wall under makeshift, crudely lettered signs. Several hundred others sat staring at the numbers from rows of tomato-colored plastic chairs. Many had arrived with family and friends: tribal huddles of jokesters and seat-savers and designated English-speakers, who stood ready (if need arose) to swim forward and press elucidatory lips to the speaking-holes in the wall of glass. People stared at the fingerprint charts on their laps as if some answer lay in the ashy whorls. The woman handing out numbers only pursed her mouth if people asked her things. "No Information Questions," said her sign. A person's head could burst in the steamy air of Room 3-120; you could *die* of unanswered questions, long before your turn. "Am I acceptable? Lovable? How come there's no door on the only toilet? What time does it begin for me, the American Dream?"

Outside and down the hallway, it was so peaceful that I could hear the echo of my heels. Workers from other government offices—clean-shirted people, with keys to proper bathrooms, and mouths that brimmed with American smiles—gathered round a coffee cart. A door with a big judicial seal flew open, and I sprang back. A tall white man in a baseball cap came out with a tall black man whose hands were padlocked behind his back. Something almost tender in the captor's touch on the arm of his broken-looking prisoner reminded me of the grandma and the young man. I took the elevator down. From the wall of the lobby, a portrait of President Bush (Oval Office, flag) was grinning at the undiminished crowd outside the glass doors and at a big white sign nearby. "Why are you waiting on this line?" it read, in many languages. "Did you know you can call (212) . . . " But the rest had been blanked out with a sticker; from where I stood (with the grinning man) you couldn't see any number to call at all. ♦

IN THE WARM TROPICAL WATERS OF MIAMI, THERE IS A COMMUNITY UNLIKE ANY IN THE WORLD.

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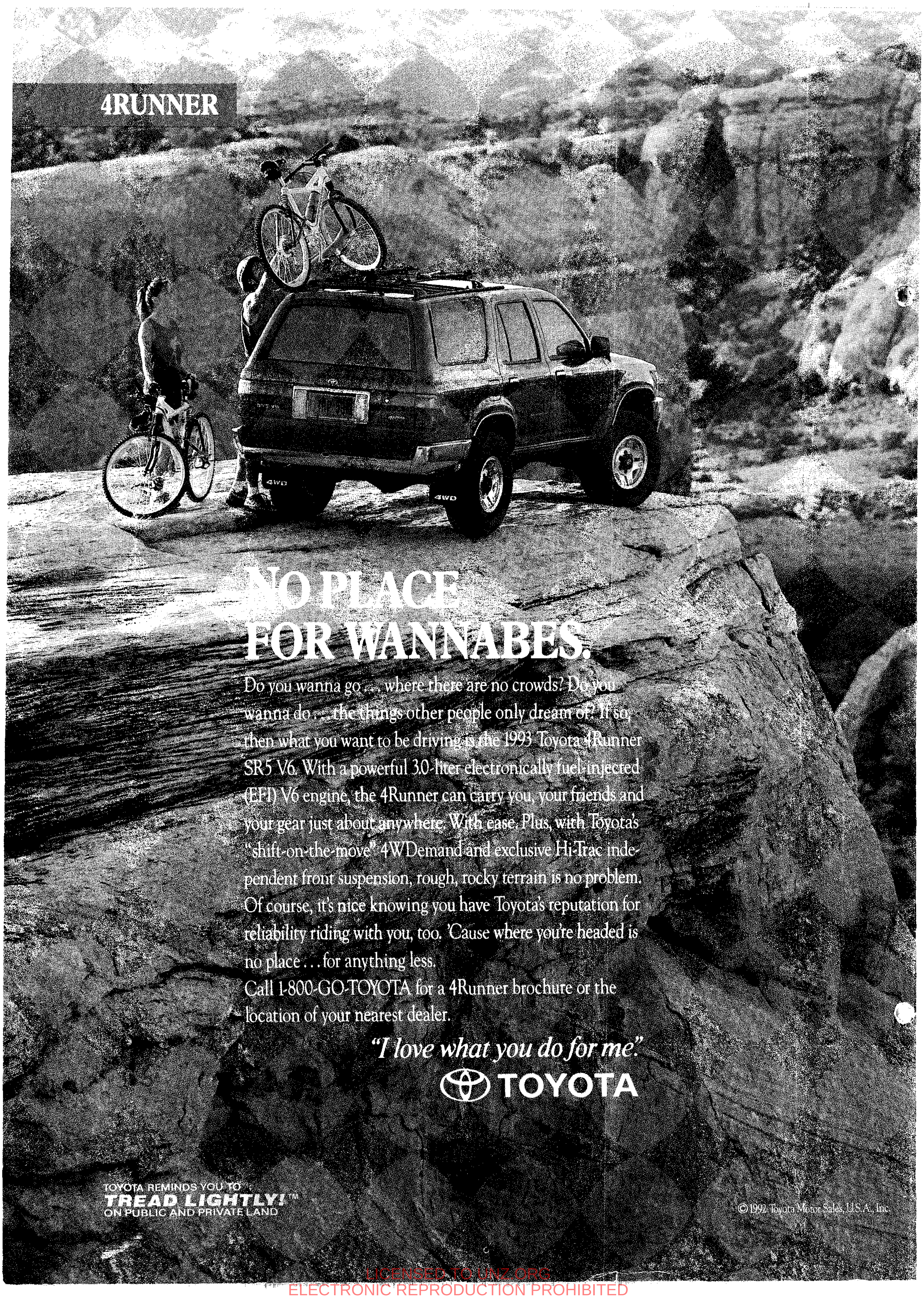

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